Dear colleagues,

It’s a great pleasure to open with this introduction and before you lies our newest version of the Newsletter.

I’m still feeling the energy of the EAGT/AAGT Conference and so I hope you’ll appreciate what you will find inside.

I’m very happy because three new persons decided to become member of our Newsletter team.

So I would like to give my welcoming to Arpad Mondok, Alessandra Merizzi and Cristina Comanac. We are always ready to involve other people from the Gestalt community.

I would also like to push the GB officers to encourage them to write something about their country. I’d also like to invite all EAGT members to send us something for the Newsletter section: “Creative Zone”.

I hope it will be a Christmas full of special gifts. One of these gifts are for special persons that did a huge work for EAGT (and I hope they will continue, in some way, to do that):

Gianni, Jelena, Joppie and Guus.

Michele Canavò

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In my first letter as newly elected President of EAGT I want to thank you all for your trust in me to take on this challenge and responsibility. Your loving welcome at the end of the historical conference in Taormina has been truly inspiring. I want to express my thanks to Gianni, too, for all the amazing work he has done for EAGT; it was a great pleasure for me to be in different committees with him and learn from him during his period as president of EAGT. As a symbol for our work in EAGT Gianni has handed me over the Olive tree from Athens, a wonderful symbol for our organisation. As a symbol for our work in EAGT Gianni has handed me over the Olive tree from Athens, a wonderful symbol for our organisation.

As I wrote in my letter of application, I have been member of different bodies within EAGT and thus been able to gain some experience how this organisation is working on a very high level of efficiency, given that all people involved apart from the office manager(s) are doing entirely voluntary work. And it is working because each one of us, all committee members and the members of the General Board are dedicated and interested in refining the quality of Gestalt Therapy in Europe and in contributing to its development across the world.

And I want to mention in particular 4 persons who contributed substantially to the development of our organisation in the past years and have now stepped down from their positions and functions within the GB and its different committees: my special thanks go to Joppie Bakker, Guus Klaren, Peter Schulthess and Dieter Bongers!

As a member and chair of the Executive Committee, I feel well supported by Nurith, Frans, Renata, Jack and Michele. Working with each is other is wonderful and it is good to know that Gianni and Jeleena who have now left the EC are still available in the background to guarantee a smooth transition.

Immeasurable work is done by our office manager, Marga, who in spite of her serious health issues never ceases to be there for all sort of requests and keeps an amazing record of all issues to be dealt with. Since she was not able to come to Taormina due to her ill health we have now an additional person in the office, Wilma Trip-Schrik. She is supporting Marga in her workload and you might have had contact with Wilma in the last months. Welcome on board, Wilma!

And I am happy to say, that Marga has recovered really well and is currently in a good condition. We can even hope to see you, Marga, at the March meeting in Zaandam!

Speaking of Taormina, I still feel myself in the phase of post contact of this amazing event. We have had about 1000 participants and although there were some minor issues all went amazingly well. It was a real experiment of meeting the otherness and to realize how Gestalt therapists develop creative adjustments to any given situation. I very much enjoyed the exchange with colleagues around the world and the opportunity to retreat to my process group and have an intimate space for exchange. I want to express my gratitude to all of you, who have organised this event, the convenors, the planning and scientific committee, the process group facilitators, the organisers of the scholarship funds and all others who willingly gave their time and energy to co-create this event. On site Michele has done such a great work with the Hilton Hotel staff and his team of the local organizing committee that was so helpful in all sorts of organisational needs!

Within EAGT a lot of activities are going on: the next Conference on Research in Paris is being organised "Exploring Practice based Research
in Gestalt Therapy” as well as the 5th “D-A-CH” Conference in Basel, CH, dedicated to the topic of “Core Competences in the Diverse Practice of Gestalt Therapy”.

Unfortunately both of these conferences take place at the same date May, 26th-28th, 2017. We hope that both conferences see a lot of participants!

Having experienced this problem, we strongly invite all of you to have a look at our calendar of activities on our website and enlist your planned events in this calendar in the future.

At the last AGM in Taormina the assembly voted in favour to start a new body within EAGT. The group of members that was not yet represented within the General Board until now is the accredited Training Institutes (TI’s). We want to make a closer connection to the accredited Training Institutes and learn and be inspired from their needs. This is why we suggested to form a new body – the “Training Institutes Chamber” (TIC), with the aim to nourish a common ground with representatives of the TI’s across (wider) Europe and enable them to create a network and exchange between the TI’s within EAGT. The meeting of the TI’s can organise their meetings independently and will choose a chair, who will then be the representative of TIC in the GB meeting.

The meeting of the TI’s will also consider if they want to welcome guests/observers from non-accredited institutes as well or not. The decision is up to them.

This is considered to be an experiment for three years and after a joint evaluation a decision will be taken to turn this into something permanent or not.

A first meeting of TIC will convene at our March meeting 2017, I am looking forward to chair this first meeting together with my colleagues from the EC and to take this idea forward.

Between three EAGT committees PC& QS, TSC and HR&SR a joint event is prepared where we can explore how to make use of the PC&QS document in trainings. The panel discussion of this document in Taormina was very lively and productive clarifying this topic for trainers. The document that can be downloaded from our website will remain “a work in progress” being interested in your experience that comes from using the document.

Finally I want to raise your awareness to the fact, that a new membership has been installed. As we want to attract young people to EAGT, we now offer a student membership that implies a smaller fee limited to four years of training. We hope to reach many students and see EAGT populated by young people with lots of ideas and energy.

Regarding the next EAGT conference in 2019 we are curious about all proposals that still are welcome until end of January 2017 and we invite you to propose your country as a decision will be taken by the General Board at our meeting in March 2017. If you need more information on terms and conditions, please contact us via email (info@eagt.org).

For now, I wish you a very Happy Festive Season and a very good start into a joyful and fruitful New Year,

With warm regards,

Beatrix Wimmer
EAGT President
Report from the Secretary

Dear friends,

It’s a pleasure for me to share with you my work and my feelings as secretary. I still listen to the voice of all of you on my island. A sharing of energies that changed my life and my way to be in contact. I’m very touched by that.

From one side I’m very happy to be re-confirmed in my role and on the other side I feel a bit sad because some “brothers” finished their work in the EC during the AGM. So I would really say thanks for everything to Gianni, Jelena, Joppie and Guus.

I worked very close with them in these years so I will miss them for sure. In my work as secretary I am already enjoying the “Huge success” of the Taormina Conference. We improved connections, exchanges, meetings and above all trust in our community!

We reached more than 1.200 members so you can imagine how we are improving and how each one can find support and exchanges within whole word!

I would say thank always to Mar-ga, for her incredible work in association with me and now with our new “member”, Wilma.

Enjoy your Christmas dear colleagues and friends!

Michele Cannavò
Dear colleagues and friends,

It’s my first time to write the news as NOGT’s chair. I am truly honoured by the trust you have instilled in me and am very excited. I am thrilled to be working with such a great group from many different Boards and Committees. Also I want to thank all of you for welcoming me so warmly.

As you know until September 2016 Jelena was actively involved in the NOGT’s. With her help we accomplished work with countries that were in the process of becoming Ordinary members and we could be satisfied with the fact that Poland has become OM. In the area of re-registration we finished with re-accreditation in Germany, Austria and Israel.

Dear Jelena, thank you so much for taking care of these processes! I would like to thank you for your contribution to the EAGT community. Good luck with your future endeavours!

In December Norway has sent the documents for re-accreditation – thanks! We are still waiting to receive documents from The Netherlands, Italy, Romania, U.K. and Spain. Recently we got first information form Luxembourg where there is a group of Gestaltists wanting to establish a NOGT. Also colleagues from Russia contacted us during the conference in Taormina. I hope that we will be able to work on these successfully together. Also in Taormina we had a very good meeting with both French organizations. The coming conference in Paris in 2017 “Exploring Practice-based Research in Gestalt Therapy” is a living example that the spirit of collaboration is there. Hopefully we will hear more good news from France soon.

In the end, as a NOGT officer I wish you Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Warmly,

Renata Mizerska
This has been a busy and exciting time for GPO's and the GPO committee. Generally we are seeing an increase in interest in the GPO, (Gestalt Practitioner in Organisations), accreditation from both organisational practitioners, (Coaches, Consultants and Facilitators), as well as customers. Our aim is to both increase membership and also brand recognition and in pursuit of both these aims here are some activities we have been involved in.

As many would know, EAGT have released a new website and we are pleased to note that the front page provides a separate access to therapists and organisational practitioners. This helpfully recognises the distinctiveness of organisational people within EAGT and underlines the difference in practice between therapy and organisational work. We believe this is valuable to members, but particularly welcomed by organisational clients who are searching the GPO website for information and organisational practitioners.

We are delighted and thankful for the artistic contribution of Petra van Amerongen who designed our “Bird on a wire” branding for the website.

After much discussion we believe the final images point to our individuality as practitioners while also hinting at the significance of our emphasis on good relationships and ability to work flexibly with teams/groups and large systems. We are very interested to hear your comments and feedback on the new design, here being ‘modelled’ by the committee......we think we make much better GPO’s.

At the wonderful EAGT/AAGT conference in Taormina, Sicily, we were delighted to hold a GPO workshop which provided over 50 people with insight of what being a GPO means. The individual contributions of Marie-Anne Chidiac, Sue Congram, Joe Melnick and Frans Meulmeester drew out the qualities of a GPO, typical work that might be undertaken and offered some case studies for discussion. The presentations were well received by the range of organisational practitioners who attended.

2016 has been a very good year for new GPO accreditations with 5 new GPO’s being welcomed to the community from the UK in April, (mentored by Marie-Anne Chidiac and Sally Denham-Vaughan), and 10 candidates undertaking the process in Krakow. So far Poland has 8 new GPO’s and 2 accrediting very soon, (mentored/accredited by Frans Meulmeester and Jan Standeart).

Looking ahead we are delighted at the upturn in numbers of GPO’s due to accredit in 2017. We have accreditations planned in November in France with mentoring from Isabelle Capart and accreditation process held by Marie-Anne Chidiac, Belgium and Italy, (mentoring Frans
Meulmeester and accrediting process with Jan Standeart), Greece, (mentoring by Frans and still to be decided who will join him for the accreditation) and UK, (mentoring by Sally Denham-Vaughan and Marie-Anne Chidiac and accrediting process with Frans Meulmeester). We are also seeing a steady increase in interest in Organisational training programmes with inquiries from Russia, Macedonia, Germany, Georgia and Scandinavia. As you can see, the committee is busy.

To conclude, we are very pleased with progress in both our aims of increasing accreditations and also, brand recognition in business. It is the committee’s belief that the GPO brings a unique, very valuable and effective set of skills and, especially, a ‘way of being’ to business. We believe that the business world, community’s, groups and organisations need these skills more than ever as the world shifts and changes politically. And finally, we all wish you a wonderful, inspiring 2016.

Sally, Marie-Anne, Isabelle, Jan and Frans
– The GPO committee.
Dear Colleagues,

Another year is coming to its end, and a new one is about to start, and looking back at our work, we can mark with satisfaction that TSC has continued its regular activity of supporting, advising, accrediting and re-accrediting training programs and supervisors training programs all over Europe – in addition to co-creating, together with more of EAGT’s committees – the future concept of training standards, as will be further reported.

The global political, social, cultural changes that are sweeping over Europe, bring about tremendous destruction and suffering. They carve deep wounds in the flesh of a society who for the last 50 years enjoyed a relatively peaceful and wealthy life. The scars will remain on the surface of daily life and in the souls of the environment and will need a long process of healing. These wounds also bare financial ramifications that are slower in becoming obvious – nevertheless they are already noted in our professional reality: on one hand there are more and more people and communities in need of help, support and treatment, on the other hand resources become meager and authorities look for short-cuts and cheaper services.

There is nothing new about this tendency, it was already noted in former years, however it is becoming more influential and openly visible than it was before, and it is clearly effecting the development of professional training programs in the field of psychotherapy, which are accordingly, looking for shorter, cheaper, less demanding opportunities to qualify professional helping staff.

This means that we are operating, as usual, between polarities: the one that aims to keep the quality of training as its major focus – and the other which look for the accessibility of more people to helpful resources, while watching to lower the costs...

TSC is witnessing these environmental drifts in various ways, such as getting notice about well-established institutes closing down due to lack of candidates, or other institutes changing directions, adapting their training programs to currently more attractive modes, etc..

In Taormina we were reminded of the more traditional ways of training that are customary outside of Europe, especially in the USA, which are closer to the spirit of our forefathers. These schools cultivated a tradition which negate standards, counting of hours, and grades. They depend on self regulation and on the integrity of the trainee who knows what s/he needs to learn. Lately however, also our colleagues across the ocean cannot escape from dealing with criteria, though different ones: counting number of meetings, measuring of outcome by given standards / measuring client’s satisfaction rate, etc. While there is no doubt that...
such means have enhanced research – they are nevertheless initially im-
poused by powers outside of the thera-
pic field, and would probably have been rejected by some of our Elders as they were 50 years ago...

Obviously, a non-regulated field of training professionals could not have been recognized in today’s Eu-
rope. It seems that the necessity to create standards for our training (more than 15 years ago) has turned out to be beneficial, and has sup-
ported the process of Gestalt Ther-
apy becoming a leading module at the EAP and a recognized school of therapy throughout western Europe, not to mention the bloom we witness in the last years throughout Eastern Europe.

Currently, after a few years of learning how to balance between the need to accept the concept of regu-
lating standards in therapy – and al-
lowing for training institutes to find their creative adjustment to these de-
mands – we are entering a new phase and have a new task on our hands, one that is self-imposed by our com-

munity: In the quest of optimizing the positive aspects of regulation, we refuse to linger in our comfort zone – rather, we strive to challenge our-
selves by integrating the quantitative standards that have become the cri-
teria for accreditation with qualita-
tive ones.

Thanks to the meticulous work of the PC&QS com. We now have a formulation of both the “what” train-
ees need to learn and the “how” to evaluate their learning process, their ability to integrate theory and practice and to implement unique Gestalt principles in their clinical work, which in other words is an in-
strument to evaluate their personal growth into the role of a Gestalt ther-
apist.

TSC members put our heads to-
gether with PC&QS and HR&SR committee in planning an event that would initiate possible methods of implementing these criteria as part of the routine work of training pro-
grams, taking a topic that grows out of the work of HR&SR curricula to present a case study. We know that some institute have already start-
ed to use the document written by PC&QS and it would be interesting and indeed helpful to hear about their experience in doing so.

This is where TSC co-
operates with still another project, a newly created en-
tity of EAGT, namely, TIC, (Training Insti-
tute chamber) which we hope will grow into an independ-
ent arena where representatives of accredited in-
stitute will have an opportunity to meet, discuss common issues and share experience. This creative idea of our former president Gianni, is meant to bring the field closer to the formal sections of EAGT and thus be-
come an authentic feed-back channel for our work. We would like to have a lively, on-going dialogue with institu-
tes - the immediate “clients” of our work – by which we can learn about their needs from the organization, in order to better support them.

We are thinking for instance, in terms of new training methods, better use of virtual and electronic means, growing accessibility to courses and supervision and a more flexible way of presenting theoretical materials.

If you sense a trace of satisfac-
tion in the way we present our work – you are right. We feel that the work of TSC is taking place more and more on the contact boundaries with the other committees and working groups of EAGT, that there is more cohesiveness in the way our organi-
zation is functioning and that indeed, the whole is larger than its parts...

The secret glue that binds all these part is the sincere comradeship that
prevails among the colleagues who have a very clear idea of what motivates the work we are doing: promoting Gestalt as a life philosophy, and of course the devoted work of our office director, our dear Marga, who runs the show with her so-well-organized, wise, energetic, full of humor and optimistic spirit and lately also with the help of Wilma, who seems to follow Marga’s lead and gracefully joins our journey.

We wish all our friends and colleagues a good, fruitful and rewarding New Year.

May we find a way to introduce some sanity into this chaotic environment that is our present moment.

May we continue to play our music, perhaps play it even louder, with hope.

HAPPY 2017!

Ester, Silvia, Olaf, Dick, Nurith
Chair PC&CS Committee

EAGT Committee for Professional Competencies and Quality Standards has been working on identification and description of Specific Competencies of Gestalt therapists since 2011 and EAP initiative for defining a Psychotherapist’s Core Competencies. The draft document on Specific Competencies of Gestalt Therapists was produced already in 2013. The document has been translated to several languages and we encourage you for further translations to help us to reach as many colleagues as possible.

In the previous period our Committee has been working on the revised version of the document, reviewing and integrating comments and suggestions coming from gestalt colleagues, gestalt training institutes and NOGTs who had replied on the questionnaire providing feedback on the document and to whom we are grateful. We presented the document on the EAGT Conference at Taormina on the panel “Professional Competencies and Quality Standards as Inspiration for the Gestalt therapist”, with Beatrix Wimmer, Ivana Vidakovic, Tomaz Flajs, Dick Lompa and Joseph Melnick as panellists. Within an introductory presentation we gave a background and an overview of the project and the document, offered our perspective of the usefulness of competencies for Gestalt therapists, stressed some crucial points for further discussion and invited for a dialogue from different stances. Participants on the panel, most of them also trainers or representatives of training institutes in Europe and USA, showed considerable interest and shared their practice in teaching and assessing psychotherapeutic competencies within their gestalt training programs. Creative ideas of how to use this document by NOGTs, training institutes, trainers and students are explored. Committee members (Beatrix Wimmer, Jelena Zelenskou-Djoric, Jan Roubal, Daan van Baalen, Gianni Francesetti and Ivana Vidakovic as chair PC&QS) are re-elected for the following 3 years period. We are thankful to Beatrix Wimmer for all her effort in chairing this Committee in previous years.

In the next year we are planning to work further on publishing and presenting Gestalt specific competences, through written articles, presentations on the national and international gestalt conferences, dialogue with all interested parties, in a close collaboration with Training Standards Committee and other Committees, and new Training Institutes Chamber. We aim to support gestalt students, trainers and therapists to effectively bridge Gestalt theory and practice, as well as to contribute to promotion of our professional identity of Gestalt psychotherapists.

Ivana Vidakovic Chair PC&QS committee
Dear colleagues,

Let me share my joy and optimism regarding research within Gestalt community. I can sense a move throughout the history of an attitude of the Gestalt community towards research. From “we do not want it, because it’s in a conflict with our values” via “we should do it to survive” to “we can see it as useful and interesting”. It is very promising and hopefully the next stage “we are doing it as a natural part of our practice” is not too far away vision.

I dare to see the conference in Taormina as another milestone of the way towards establishing a research tradition in our approach. I must admit I was quite nervous to introduce Leslie Greenberg, Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus of Psychology at York University in Toronto, to a thousand of Gestalt therapists in Taormina. Many years ago he retreated from the Gestalt community for similar reasons that inspired us to invite him as a key note speaker now. However, there was nothing to be worried about. Les presented his work in a way, which encouraged or even seduced Gestalt therapists to research. And the reaction of the audience was welcoming.

If we search for the most influential people in the field of current world psychotherapy, Leslie Greenberg will certainly be among them. I dare to say that psychotherapy in general would look quite different without the work of him. And if we wonder how could he make such changes, the answer would be vision and research. Les’ work is an example and inspiration of how to make research useful.

As I understand it, Les started with being curious about what works in psychotherapy and how it works. Based on his research findings he and his team developed a therapy approach not only proved effective, but also identified the mechanisms of change and constructed the relevant therapeutic interventions. Les started his career as a Gestalt therapist and I am very grateful that he continues to be so supportive of the Gestalt community both at the Gestalt research conference in Cape Cod last year and in Taormina now.

However, it was not just this Les Greenberg’s plenary presentation which made research visible in Taormina. There were research posters, lectures and panels and I would like to thank very much to all the colleagues who contributed with their research activities to the conference program. The conference organizers were also actively supporting research presentations by offering a Young Researchers Award.

Few announcements at the end: There are still some places available at the Third International Gestalt Research Conference in Paris 26-28 May 2017 (www.gestalt-research.com). This conference is intended for networking, collaboration and the elaboration of new research projects for Gestalt therapy. It is addressed to Gestalt practitioners, trainees and other psychotherapy practitioners. You are very welcome to submit your proposal; the deadline is January 31st 2017.

I am happy to announce that the book Towards a Research Tradition in Gestalt Therapy was just published in the Cambridge Scholars Publishing. You can buy through the publisher website or you can get it heavily discounted at the Paris Research conference.

And please save the dates of the coming conferences of the Society for Psychotherapy Research: 20-22/9/2017 Oxford (European chapter), 27-30/6/2018 Amsterdam.

Wishing you all the best for 2017!

Jan Roubal
Dear colleagues,

Our committee goes on with its tasks processing the documents from NOGTs and Training Institute’s and also dealing with complaints and appeals. All this keeps us quite busy. Besides that, we also focus on introducing the issue of ethics more in the Gestalt community and so we really enjoyed the dialogue with people who came to the workshop of our committee in Taormina during the conference. It showed again the issue of ethics attracts a limited number of people, but attracts them strongly.

The Ethics Committee is undergoing a transformation now and the change in the chairing person is part of it. The process is not too easy. After unsuccessfully trying different other options to find a new chair of the committee, we finally came to a provisional solution. Jan Roubal was elected at the AGM in Taormina as the interim chair of the Ethics committee for the limited time of one year, after which a new chair will be elected. Astrid Dusendschön agreed to use this year for first contacts with the chair position (in cooperation with Jan Roubal). This seems to be the best creative adjustment, which will provide the new members of our committee enough time needed to accommodate to the committee functioning. We are grateful to Joppie, who will stay as a background support for the committee for this transformation period. So the members of EAGT Ethics Committee are Jan Roubal (interim chair), Hélène Fellman, Liz Kerry, Astrid Dusendschön and Veronica Klingemann. Let the new members present themselves for you now:

Veronica Klingemann.
I am from Germany and I was elected as member of the Ethic Committee in Taormina. I was born in the Western part of Germany, studied education sciences, psychology and sociology in Berlin in the eighties. During my time at the university I came in touch with Gestalt-therapy. It was a time of experiments, looking for interesting ways of learning and development at the university.

I got in continuous touch with Gestalt in 1999 when I started my training in Berlin. Graduation 2003. Since 2006 I am an active member of the German NOGT DVG. From 2009 to 2013 I was the President of the DVG.

I am still working in my NOGT in the Quality Committee and in the commission for training standards and certification. Since 2010 I am together with Olaf Zielke the representative of the German NOGT in the General Board of EAGT. I was part of EAGT in the process of growing and the challenge to find guidelines for different backgrounds, different cultures and different needs. And for this we need a lot of discussion and awareness and I really appreciate the Ethic Committee for bringing up topics to be aware.

My personal life changed a lot in the last months, for my husband died in October. So I will start my work with a really different background for the new figure.

Astrid Dusendschön.
I live in France in the region of Brittany. I initially studied business and worked 16 years in a private company. I rapidly started studying psychology in parallel and graduated as clinical psychologist.

Today I work as psychotherapist, supervisor and coach. I also am a regular trainer at Ecole Parisienne de Gestalt (Paris), and at époké, institute for GPO, both since 2012.

I joined this year Paris Dauphine as lecturer in Gestalt in their Executive Master Coaching program. Among others, 2 motivations for me to join EEC. First, if an ethics code gives a frame, often in our practice we are facing questions exceeding stricto sensu an ethics code. Second, I think
that in a foreseeable close future we are summoned to reflect on and create future new forms of our profession (the actual being “absorbed” by Law, insurances, ..., resulting in loss of liberty of our praxis). Reflecting with colleagues on these questions, among other, mobilises me.

Finally, we would like to give a tribute to EEC’s former Chair Joppie Bakker:

Joppie’s formal position in EAGT began in 2001 as Secretary, then in 2007, at the Conference in Athens, she was elected Chair of the Ethics Committee where, over nine years until 2016, she developed an influential and strong commitment to the role.

She became passionate about the implications of Ethics in both professional organisations and personal practice, particularly the traumatic consequences when the client/therapist relationship becomes a conflict leading to a formal complaint. Over the years as Chair she has maintained a consistent and perceptive guidance for the Ethics Committee and for EAGT. Her acute awareness of how a therapist’s personal beliefs can subtly influence the therapy, or professional relationships, led to successfully establishing a workshop on the subject at the Taormina Conference this year, challenging us to continually question our perspective. Her particular energy and perception motivates us and keeps us on track.

« To me, as a novice in 2015, Joppie’s warmth and depth of experience continue to be a source of inspiration » (Liz).

« Joppie has really inspired me to take all ethical issues seriously – and to never, ever give them up » (Hélène).

« Joppie learned me, how ethics can be joyfully lived in our practice and relationships » (Jan).

« Joppie and I shared many, many laughs during our work together and I simply love her sense of humour but most of all I was and am always impressed by her strong feeling for ethical issues » (Marga).

Jan Roubal,
Astrid Dusendschön,
Liz Kerry,
Veronica Klingemann and Hélène Fellman
From Middle East to Taormina, from Rotterdam and Athens to Thessaloniki and back!

Antonia Konstantinidou:
There is a long-term relationship between Human Rights & Social Responsibility Committee of EAGT and Hellenic Association for Gestalt Therapy (see for example previous issue of EAGT Newsletter). Common projects and activities (especially about refugees from Middle East coming to Greece) have strengthened our contact and bonds the last few years. This is why we arranged a meeting in EAGT Conference in Taormina last September, to meet and discuss how we are doing and what we could do in the future together. In a place that knows well about refugees and also a place that became shortly our common ground for us, Gestalt therapists from around the world.

We talked about many things, the benefit that came from common projects, and what were the difficulties we all faced. At the end of our meeting, we came up with the idea to support a Greek Committee about Human Rights & Social Responsibility. How could we initiate in the best way this project? Luckily, we had a very good opportunity in the near future. Hellenic Association was organizing a 2-days Conference for their members at the end of November. I proposed to come and speak about voluntarily work, how it is to work for the suffering of the Other. And guess what? My proposal was accepted...

Joanna Kato: In this co-creative article there is also the other side of the experience.....
How are we going to represent the HR&SR Committee of EAGT? Me and Guus asked ourselves...
A presentation? ...with a discussion? We decided to talk a little about what we do and also include some personal experiences.

Guus Klaren: The title of our presentations was ‘Are we prepared when safety collapses?’
The aim of it was to encourage the emerging process of founding a local human rights committee in Greece.

J: We were both very nervous, so we were telling a lot of jokes, even right before starting.
I did not print the presentation. I see Guus looking at his notes...
The Aristotelis’ Hall is both impressive and intimidating. So is the idea of 140 people we saw on Saturday, looking at us and listening. Will this ever change?
On Sunday morning it is raining.... We are concerned nobody will be there to listen. Our ground (people connected with Gestalt therapy) did not collapse but is a bit shaken.

G: So is the ground of professional therapists in Greece, where safety, as we knew it, does no more exist.
The idea of voluntary work has been twisted and misinterpreted by being “forced to do unpaid jobs to be able to stay in touch with the field of psychotherapy”.
How difficult to talk about offering to others, when basic needs of the society are not covered.....
I am unsure about how our presentation will sound... I have heard so many times (and experienced myself) how difficult is everyday coping with all the obligations, especially since the time of crisis began.
Creating a local Human Rights and Social Responsibility committee...
would be building ground, to provide well organized support in a liquid society where the human rights of the other and of relating is devaluated.

A: Sunday, November 27th, the second day of the conference. In an impressive hall in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, with a lot of history inside, there were about 140 people, half of them Greek Gestalt therapists. Guus Klaren and Joanna Kato opened the day with their presentation. They talk about HR&SR Committee, the history, the activity, the goals. They don’t complete their presentation. A spontaneous applause came when they shared their experience in working for this committee. It seemed that something touched the audience...

Next moment of the day, it was a fishbowl meeting, organized by the Study Group of Hellenic Association for Gestalt Therapy. It was an experiment for a community dialogue about social and political events that influenced us as human beings and as psychotherapists. The emotions were very intense, obvious to everybody’s face and posture. A very strong 1,5 hours where the sharing of human vulnerability connected us strongly.

J: I enter the fishbowl to talk. Guus does not understand words and still I see he understands the expressions, the sharing, the connection. I am very touched. I also feel I belong here.

A: After the break, a big circle was created with Guus and Joanna as facilitators. After the group discussion, there was a paper with a lot of names and e-mails. It was the beginning of a Google Group: 

gestaltvoluntarywork@googlegroups.com!

J: The group is currently exploring local needs and exchanging opinions. Talking about what? where? and how? Voluntary support might be offered.

A: If this will develop in an organized Greek HR&SR Committee, I don’t know. I wish for that. What I do know is the gratitude I felt for those moments of sharing and belongingness. I feel gratitude for Guus and Joanna, for my colleagues, for EAGT, for world Gestalt therapy community. I keep these hours in my heart still warm. And the same happens with many colleagues who were present there and then. For this day, I have only one word: Thank you!

J: The same “Thank you” goes to HAGT (I mean real people here, there are so many names) and you Antonia for the invitation, for listening and supporting us, thank you Guus for sharing the anxiety and the process of creating this presentation.

What I have experienced once again during this conference is the power of human presence and connection, even (or maybe especially) when things are difficult. I am always surprised by the magic of ground being built in relations and by the strength of sharing personal experiences.

This sharing brought us together, and suddenly the ground is more stable.. And for that I also am grateful.

Antonia Konstantinidou,
M.Sc Social & Clinical Psychology, Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer & Supervisor, President of Hellenic Association for Gestalt Therapy (H.A.G.T.), E-mail: konstant108@gmail.com

Joanna Kato,
M.Sc Psychologist, Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer & Supervisor, Member of Hellenic Association for Gestalt Therapy (H.A.G.T.), Chair of HR&SR EAGT, E-mail: kato.joan@gmail.com

Guus Klaren,
Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer & Supervisor, prior Chair of HR&SR EAGT, E-mail: gklaren@hetnet.nl
Spontaneous Conference action

Spontaneous action on refusal of Visa during the Taormina conference.

During the opening ceremony of the Taormina conference, Gianni Francesetti, gave attention to the fact that four Nepali students from the Gestalt Institute in Kathmandu were refused their Visa by the Italian officers.

Many people were very disappointed, but also upset, that the growing fear for refugees in Europe is leading to such a very restrictive policy regarding requests for Visa.

As a spontaneous response to this, a group of participants formulated a petition for the organisers and the boards of the involved associations to take action.

This resulted in a letter to the Italian consulate and government on behalf of the EAGT, AAGT en the organisers of the joint conference.

Below you can read the petition and the response to the petition as well as the letter which was sent to the Italian consulate.

Unfortunately, the Italian consulate did not have the courtesy to give a response to our letter.

Frans Meulmeester
To: AAGT/EAGT Conference Conveners: Gianni Francesetti, Burt Lazarin, Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb, Jelena Zeleskov Djoric
Current AAGT and EAGT Presidents: Patricia Tucker and Gianni Francesetti
Incoming AAGT and EAGT Presidents: Toni Gilligan and Beatrix Wimmer

We, participants of the 2016 joint conference held by the European Association of Gestalt Therapy and the Association for the Advancement of Gestalt Therapy in Giardini Naxos (ME), Italy are having the pleasure of meeting with 1,000 colleagues from around the world from Wednesday 21 September to Sunday 25 September. We were deeply disturbed to learn the Italian consulate had denied travel visas for four Nepalese colleagues who were prepared to come.

We expect the Italian government as well as all governments respect the human right to the freedom of movement. We oppose preemptive measures that deny travel based on stereotypes of nationalities.

Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

In an era of increasingly restrictive measures by nationstates in the name of security, we are aware of other instances in which the right to the freedom of movement has been denied those seeking to participate in professional meetings. We believe that respecting this right is crucial for promoting the exchange of knowledge within and among all nations and territories.

We are embarrassed to be citizens of countries and regions whose actions contradict the liberal values that our nations espouse. Human rights are central to our liberal values and underscore the kinds of societies we want to live in and create.

We expect that the EAGT and AAGT be prepared with interventions if and when colleagues are denied the right to freedom of movement to future conferences.

Signed:

1. Alessandra Balena
2. Michelle Billies
3. Joanna Kato
4. Katharina Stahlmann
5. David Cebrian Tarrason
6. Ivana Vidakovic
7. Agneta Wallin
8. Geus Klassen
9. Lynne Dassett

Name: Claire Coleman Country: Ireland

Name: Victoria Menkova Country: Belarus
Taormina, October, 23rd, 2016

To whom it may concern,

From September, 22nd till September, 25th, 2016, the European Association for Gestalt Therapy (EAGT) and the Association for Advanced Gestalt Therapy (AAGT) organised their conference on the beautiful island of Sicily.
We were very happy to see, how welcome we were and how the local people showed us a warm welcome and a big hospitality.
We are very grateful for that.

However, there was also a huge shadow of disappointment present during our conference. Four psychotherapy students of the Himalayan Pathway Psychotherapy Institute of Kathmandu, Nepal, Mrs. Pragya Shrestha, Mrs. Monalisha Pradhan, Mrs. Pratima Tamrakar and Mrs. Minakshi Rana, who wanted so dearly to join us were refused their visa and could not participate in this global gathering of our community.

It is not only them who regret that a lot, but also many of the participants of the conference were very disappointed. We could have learned from them and they could have learned from us. They wanted to share their knowledge and experiences on the mental healthcare situation in Nepal and on a research they had done on Resilience after the massive earthquakes in April and May 2015. They had prepared a poster presentation on this research which was accepted by the conveners, meaning that they were invited to contribute to the scientific part of the conference and not just as participants only.

And of course, they wanted to be in touch with and learn from the Western community of Gestalt colleagues. This would mean a huge support to them. Unfortunately, this opportunity was not giving to them and to us.

The fact that both scholarship funds of AAGT and EAGT were willing to support these students to enable them to participate may prove, how important we all valued their presence during the conference.

We understand, that now a days, with all the recent and possible terroristic attacks in Europe and the wide spread fear for getting too many refugees immigrating to Europe, the security at the borders of Europe is more strict.
We do not always agree on these sometimes very extreme regulations, but we realise that this has become part of the European mentality.

Local Organizer
SIPG (Societa Italiana Psicoterapia Gestalt)

Conference conveners
Gianni Francesco, Barlo Lazari, Margherita Spagnolo Lobb, Jelena Zeleznik Djeri

Planning and Scientific Committee
Claire Akerstrom, Brian, Dan Bloom, Michele Canaccio, Dominique Chabre, Geoff Fenlon, Guenni Francesco, Cathy Gory, Elena Guant, Peter Klepper, Beulé Lavo, Roberta La Rosa, Barlo Lazari, Nazih Levi, Dina Miller, Jack Van Lieshout, Sue O’Reane, Mark Rock, Jean Reubel, Margherita Spagnolo Lobb, Silvia Tosti, Jelena Zeleznik Djeri

www.taorminaconference2016.com
However, we are very disappointed that the Italian consulate was not able to identify the difference between an application of a possible refugee, for whom we also hope that every application is handled with care and respect, and one of four serious Nepalese psychotherapy students / professionals, who want to attend a conference. Each of these women has provided very detailed information on their private and professional status in Nepal and on the intention of their visit. This information was confirmed by both their training institute in Nepal and their trainers from the Dutch/Flemish institute Multidimens as well as by the president of the EAGT, who explicitly wrote to them a personal invitational letter. All these documents were attached to their application.

First of all, we regret that the consulate, despite all the provided information, was not able to evaluate their application in a positive way.

But more than that, we want to express that we are very upset that all four women were judged as 'non reliable'. This is an insult to our dedicated and highly valued Nepalese colleagues. If it was stated, that the information provided was not sufficient, we can understand, but to state that it was not reliable, is an insult and a very painful experience for all four of them and for all 1300 other participants, who supported them.

Therefore, we have three requests and we hope that you are willing to look into this:
1. We request you to have a look into your procedures and especially into the quality of the procedures, to enable a better distinction between different kind of applications.
2. We request you to be more respectful and careful in the formulation of arguments underlying your rejection of an application. To name a person 'unreliable' is insulting, painful and inappropriate and causes more psychological damage to a person than your officers might realise.
3. We request you to inform us and help us on how they and we might have done the application and the provided information in a better, more successful way. We want to learn from this situation, to be able to improve possible application in the future.

We hope you are willing and able to answer to our requests.

On behalf of the conveners of the combined AAGT / EAGT Gestalt Therapy Conference 2016, the board of both AAGT and EAGT and on behalf of all participants of the conference and especially on behalf of Mrs. Pragya Shrestha, Mrs. Monalisha Pradhan, Mrs. Pratima Tamrakar and Mrs. Minakshi Rana,

With due respect and kind regards,

F.J. Meulmeester
Board member of the EAGT
To me, experiencing spirituality is confluence, where the most important is the “we” experience. This is not necessarily a connection, there is no necessity for the presence of the ‘I’, who can melt into something greater, there are times, when this is a deflection, avoidance to face with who really I am. Spirituality can also be a refuge. Many aspects of the seemingly seem subject, different effect on therapy, counselling.

I do agree with the opinion of Buber: there can only be connection to God, if I am aware of who I really am, as the substance of the connection is the change occurring during the simultaneous realization of I and Thou, by also being able to experience the “we”. God only hears, he/she who knows who he/she is.

When a client sits in front of me, the possibility of carefrontation is present: humble caring and at the same time gentle confrontation. We can connect multiple ways and the client more and more lives through, who she/he really is. Can be through the similarity of our believe system or rather encountering differences.

I am no way being a neutral screen to the client, rather I make whatever I am capable to – in and out of therapy – to create awareness of the relationship and interconnectedness of the situation, the client and myself. This is such a flexible connection, where I support the client, to become able to see her/himself more fully and freely. Through me or through what appears in between us, by manifestation of layers of him/herself (also when visibly trying to avoid manifesting, resulting incongruence in the situation). I can give feedback to the situation (when you get sad, you also say (Oh my God), what appears on the level of senses (and not as opinion or thought). This can be also be symbols of believe (like a word, phrase as mentioned in the previous example or a sign on a drawing or bodily gesture) allowing to give attention and embody the client’s relationship with it.

The ambivalence related to believe, spirituality can also give an opportunity: “You said you got divorced, as your husband have been rude to you for a long time, whilst you do not even dare to mention it in confession, as you think your religion does not fit with divorce. How is it to think about talking about this to the priest?” To this there is no need to have the same believe system or religion, but it is vital to accept and understand the client, as without this, no help is possible. Kierkegaard puts it this way: it is to find first where the client is, before we can start moving together. I may have immense knowledge of the religion, may have emotions attached to it, but to me the main thing is how the client is whit it.

If I am incapable to sit patently with the radiantly wide eyed, fixed pupil jogini (ie: female yoga practitioner) who talks about being prepared to sell all her goods, as she has finally found her believe, to go to India to meet a yogi, leaving family, kids behind, then there is no chance to get to the realization, that she did not have a single relationship, where she was not feeling herself less clever and defenseless than the men, who she sees being like God for a while.

Religion, can be a hidden power, even if this is not getting figural or denies its presence. Leaving time, space and attention to rather small signs (“I have heard the church bells and I have seen you have been looking out at the same time. What is in the sound of this bell for you?”) provides opportunity, to realize significance and meaning upon the client’s life.

This is not a dialectical materialist viewpoint. Much more holistic, being true to the nature of Gestalt-therapy, where becoming aware of the nature of relationship (ie: inter, intra personal etc.) is one of the core elements. To this there is no need share the same believe or religion. Its more than enough to be able to constantly remind ourselves: who did I become by you, how are we together now.

Mondok Árpád
A question as I write this article is how much will I reveal of myself. How far will I explore the authentic me, knowing that there is a “you” that may read this? The interplay of me and other has been at the heart of my personal journey for the past 14 years, and is the space in which I have been able to heal. That flow of me...you...and the between, is at the core of Meeting Point, a new venture that brings people into relationship with one another.

I woke up one morning in 2002 and found myself hanging onto the edge of an existential cliff, terrified. From here I began a journey, inland a little onto firmer ground, and have explored a multitude of experiences so that I may recover and grow. I am currently in my third year of training as a Gestalt psychotherapist at Metanoia Institute, London. At the heart of these growthful experiences have been experiments with contact. Over a six year period, I shot many films of self-portrait photographs, initially in the privacy of my home, then increasingly outside in the public domain. The awakening I experienced as I came into contact with myself was profound. I started to grow, and increasingly reach out for direct contact with others. So, I began standing in public places offering out postcards on which I had written messages of goodwill. If a passer-by took a card from my hand, or made direct eye contact as he/she passed, I noticed within me raised awareness of physical sensation. I was at the edge of my comfort zone, just inside my window of tolerance, in a space that forced my mind and body into life, into relationship with my environment. As each photograph I took was a cycle of experience, so was each card I gave out. As in the past the energy for taking photos waned and offering out cards grew, so now over the past year I have given out fewer postcards and have waited for the next experiment in contact to emerge.

An encounter with a Spanish Gestalt colleague at the EAGT/AAGT conference in Sicily brought to focus the next stage of the journey: circles of 8-12 chairs in public spaces, where anyone can come and sit, and join, for as long or as short a period as he/she may want to. This, essentially, is a “meeting point”. The space may be a park, a town square, a shopping centre, or a myriad of other public places. A meeting point exists for an hour and a half, and is attended by at least one member of the Meeting Point team. The Meeting Point team member holds the space as a welcoming, accepting, and safe place to be; the participants are free to explore their experience, in relation to others in the group at that moment in time. Whilst unique in-itself, Meeting Point references various other projects and philosophies such as Gestalt process groups, Bohmian dialogue, religious or philosophical gatherings, public community meetings and groups.

The motivation from a personal perspective, is to grow, develop, and understand. I want to know more about what it means for me to meet others, and how it is for others to come into contact. I want to explore what these meetings may create. Through a wider lens, I want to know what we, as human beings together, can co-create, when we come into relationship in the same space. I want to know more about our individual, and collective potential. I want to understand whether, and if so how, this potential can create something better in our contemporary societies.

My vision for Meeting Point, and meeting points, is that it is the ground for nourishment, a space of colour, a witness to aspects of our experience that are dying, and the heart of new life. My hope is that when someone stops at a meeting point, they feel accepted, enabled, empowered, and experience a sense of belonging. And ultimately that they can grow from this. My experience is that when I truly meet someone, in the between, I grow.

Meeting Point draws heavily on Gestalt philosophy and practice, and applies it in the public domain. I would love to see Meeting Point as a venture that grows across different communities and countries, with common values and goals. Meeting Point is a live entity, in relationship with and therefore responsive to the
It’s certainly time that we think about making and sharing Gestalt-movies. So, we made a committee: Hanna Alén (Finland), Ien van Duijnhoven (The Netherlands) and Renata Mizerska (Poland). At the General Board meeting, last September in Taormina, we presented our plan and we got the green light.

Since we are all part of the EAGT community, let’s do it all together.

We are sure there is already a lot of material out there, and it is nice to inspire and get inspired by this. We want to collect all those links and find a way to share them.

There is a lot of creativity in this community, so let’s use it.

And once a year, at the AGM, we vote for the best Gestalt-movie of the year (out of 3 nominees)!

So please send us your film, your link, your idea or other comments, using: EAGTmovies@gmail.com

And just to make a start we include our first link: https://youtu.be/7Rc5TVI4erY

This idea hasn’t been fully developed yet. Let’s just begin, so it can grow by experience!

Hanna Alén, Ien van Duijnhoven and Renata Mizerska

Gestalt Movies

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Hanna Alén, Ien van Duijnhoven and Renata Mizerska
Dear Pedro Diaz, I am happy to welcome you in «the interview» section of this EAGT’s December 2016 newsletter issue.

The aim of the section is to have a space in our newsletter to allow members of EAGT to share about who they are, their practice, activities, their links to EAGT, ... in order to support creating ties, curiosity to go towards and discover the people who form our EAGT community.

We met at the joint EAGT/AAGT conference in Taormina at some point among all persons and activities experienced – and sufficiently insufficiently to make me curious to meeting you more and asking you if you would agree to be interviewed.

Pedro Diaz

Dear Astrid,

Here I am, having a glass of red wine after a long day. I am driven by your invitation to take part of this interview for EAGT newsletter. I become curious and interested.

I will introduce myself. I am Pedro Diaz, I am from Venezuela and for the last nearly 14 years I have lived in London. I came to make sure my children (now 30 and 33) would have different horizon from the one my country would offer to them in this historic moment of deep deterioration. But let’s not go there. Coming to London was like coming back home in a way as I did my PhD here in early 90’s.

It makes me happy to see my children painting the canvas or their lives and realising that I am just a spectator of those pieces of art. It makes me happy to see my students growing up, flourishing and standing on their feet; they have been making their own journey. It makes me happy to have a 30 min walk to work in a busy city and find pleasure on that. It makes me happy to dance, and to dance with someone that enjoys it as well. Fantastic.

It makes me sad the waste of time, energy, and lives in wars orchestrated by a few; the anguish in a face of an innocent child that faces the horrors of war. At work, it makes me sad how ‘we’ keep trapped in games that keep us separated, disconnected, and meaningless.

I haven’t mentioned; I am a part time psychotherapist. I am a full-time lecturer in engineering. These last few years I have started resenting being separated from teaching and doing more ‘management’; then the classroom become occupied by faces that I don’t recognise anymore. Yes, I suppose that also makes me sad. Maybe is time to move full-time to psychotherapy.

I initially started my training in Psychotherapy about 16 years ago, back in Venezuela. Gestalt model there was more Fritz Perls’ style. Very experiential. In my second session, we (the training group) played animals roles in a jungle. I don’t know if it was my seeing a ‘monkey shagging a black panther’ that prevented me from continuing my training then. It was life setting other priorities form me that made me stop. I resumed my training about 6 years later in London, at the Gestalt Centre. To my initial disappointment, there was not jungle there but a circle of chairs that I learned to love.

I liked the experiential aspect of GT, the existential and relational axes. I like the hope that can offer. I did not like psychoanalysis and its prescribing and forensic approach. This has been changing. Some psychotherapy streams seem to join in the relational aspect. I like to think of GT as plenty of opportunities and avenues. In the UK GT does not have the credibility and research support that CBT has. Although there have been advances in the use of GT to
I do not feel like applying it with them. I would need to research more on this. I would like to see GT as an alive growing opportunity; it saddens and annoys me absolutist position of some people in GT, like the hold the absolute truth. Saying this, I realise there is a lot of healing in our community as well.

Coming back to the interview script ... ‘one professional experience I would never forget’. I suppose the relief of a client feeling confirmed as a new and healing experience. If I were to choose 1 to 3 words to depict me as a private and a professional: father, son and inclusion. I need to think about this more.

A question you did not ask and I would have liked you did: How was for you to be asked to be interviewed? Had I been asked by someone else to be interviewed, I am not sure if I had agreed. I am rather shy and private (that was the script I had created), yet it was the warmth and frankness that I contacted when I met you that allowed me trusting this experience.

I am currently working in London with individuals and couples. My website is:

http://www.mygestalt.com

I am looking forward to be closer to GT community.

I might go for another glass of wine.

Thank you, Astrid.
Pedro Xx

Thank you very much, Pedro, for your time, openness, and our delicate contacts.

Astrid Dusendschön
December 2016
Inspiration by writings about Gestalt Therapy / Antonia Konstantinidou & Astrid Dusendschön

The amount of articles and books about Gestalt Therapy is certainly big and overwhelming. A lot of interesting writings exist all over the world. At times though, we all have read something that inspired us and had an impact on us. There are pieces of words, paragraphs, phrases, excerpts from journals and books about Gestalt Therapy that left a deep impression. These kinds of moments we would like to share.

All of you, who have to propose something that inspired you, feel welcomed to suggest it. Recommend an article or a book, write one or two paragraphs about it, and send it... We will store it and edit it for the forthcoming issues of EAGT Newsletter.

Contact: info@eagt.org, add to the subject: For EAGT Newsletter

Donna Orange: “My other’s keeper: Resources for the ethical turn in psychotherapy” by Antonia Konstantinidou

This issue is deeply influenced by the joint conference of EAGT and AAGT under the title “The Aesthetic of Otherness: meeting at the boundary in a desensitized world”. It was a rich, sometimes overwhelming meeting where we challenged our fixed concepts about Gestalt therapy, the other and ourselves in various ways.

• Donna Orange’s speech

“One of the strongest stimulations, that created a lot of inspiration and discussions, was the first plenary speech by Donna Orange along with comments by Dan Bloom, Lynn Jacobs and Margherita Spagnuolo Lobb. The title of the presentation: “My other’s keeper: Resources for the ethical turn in psychotherapy”. In her speech, Donna Orange talked about the ethical responsibility of the psychotherapist toward the “suffering” other and the resources that we need as therapists to undertake this responsibility. Among many things, she said: “…Let us assume that trauma is both event and experience. Something terrible has occurred: an earthquake, a rape, the death of a child, torture, genocide, a cancer diagnosis. Nothing can be as it was before, or can be trusted to be as we assumed it to be. One’s world is just deranged (Stolorow, 2007), and even when gradually reorganized around the tornado’s devastation or the dictator’s dictates, this reality is always haunted by the sense that terrible things can happen at any moment…”

…The clinician, like other humanitarian workers, lives in a double asymmetry. From a surface point of view, we have all the power in the clinical relationship. We set the time, the place, the fee, and decide whether to see this troubled person or not. On the other side, once we are involved, we are besieged and persecuted by the face of the Other, just as Emmanuel Lévinas wrote. One expression he used for this condition of infinite responsibility, when we are so finite, was traumatism. Critchley explains that for Levinas “my relation to the other is not some benign benevolence, compassionate care or respect for the other’s autonomy, but is the obsessive experience of a responsibility that persecutes me with its sheer weight” (Simon Critchley, 2007), pp. 60-61. “The ethical de-
mand,” Critchley goes on, “is a traumatic demand, it is something that comes from outside the subject from a heteronomous source, but which leaves imprint within the subject” (p. 61). The condition of the subject persecuted by preoriginal responsibility, traumatism never ends…”* 

* Excerpt from the speech of Donna M. Orange. The speech you can find at: http://www.taorminaconference2016.com/eng/presentations/

We asked Donna Orange to comment on a question we heard a lot during the discussions there in Taormina:

Dear Donna, thank you very much for accepting to comment for EAGT Newsletter. One of the many questions that arose from your speech was about the focus on suffering and the ethical responsibility of the therapist to suffer with the other. What about meeting the suffering other, while also keeping alive our connection and grounding of ourselves as therapists/professionals accompanying the suffering other in the joy and lightness of existence?

DONNA: Yes, I often hear this question about how radical ethics is oriented to suffering and ignores the beauty, joy, and lightness (I would add humor) in human life. These more positive aspects, I think, actually sustain us—patients and therapists—while we cope with trauma and injustice. We need them for ourselves and must support them in the

**Tonino Griffiero:** “Atmospheres as quasi-things – for a pathic aesthetics”

by Astrid Dusendschön

**• Tonino Griffiero’s speech**

In his speech, Tonino Griffiero presented first the definition he gives to the concept “pathic aesthetics”, followed by the one of “atmospheres”. He then explicited how “atmospheres” opened up to the concept of “quasi-things”, and concluded on “authority of atmospheric feelings”. Among many things, he said: “...the philosophy I embrace explicitly favours ontological inflationism – that’s the authentic leitmotif of my works – and a phenomenology engaged with what appears (the phenomenon) as it appears and in the affective-bodily involvement it implies, besides its genesis or causes... ...Pathic aesthetics (...) intends to remain (...) as faithful as possible to the presence – to the way in which “appearances” resound in our lived body... ... The present pathic and atmospherical aesthetics (...) emphasizes (...) the cooperative relationship between perception and the more nuanced dimension of quasi-things which (...) emotionally tune their surroundings. I want to offer an initial aesthetological and philosophical analysis of this pathic area, intermediate (“in between” indeed) but preualistic. ... ... In short: we must learn to ‘experience pathically’ (in the right way) We must pay attention (...) to the pathic “to me” (...) that precedes eological solidification, which as such is fatally destined to the dualism typical of cognitivism. Having this program in mind, I wish to try to conceive of human beings not as ‘subjects-of’ but rather as ‘subjects-to’ – not independent and autonomous as modernity would it, but sovereign and adult just because they were educated to expose

themselves (in the right way). ... “* 

* Excerpt from the speech of Tonino Griffiero. The speech you can find at: http://www.taorminaconference2016.com/eng/presentations/

We asked Tonino Griffiero to comment on a question we heard a lot during the discussions there in Taormina:

“Dear Tonino, thank you very much for accepting to comment for EAGT Newsletter. Your speech has been for several of the auditors present a demanding one to follow just by listening. It brought us to a rich place of philosophical concepts and also gave us a small insight into your work which, from what reflected through your presentation, seems passionate. Among the panel of your speech: Monica Botelho Alvim, Gianni Francesetti and Jean-Marie Robine, the latter raised the question about the concept of quasi-things as being reification. Would you agree to...
**TONINO:** I know well that what irritates the most within the atmospherologic approach is not just the partial (sociological, anthropological) desubjectification of feelings, but rather their ontologization, even in spatial terms. This thesis shockingly distances itself from introjection and aims at underlining the external, not just projective, nature of (atmospheric) feelings. Such externality is also proven by the fact that sometimes we can also simply observe feelings with a distanced attitude, we can talk about them with other people and understand each other almost completely, as well as speculate about their effectiveness through counterfactual reasoning and skilful situational manipulations. This ontological objectification has obviously been seen as a dangerous reification, even as a pseudo-transcendence similar to that of Platonic ideas! However, this objection falls short, at least faced with those atmospheres I call prototypical (objective, external and unintentional, and sometimes lacking a precise name), differentiating them from the derivative (objective, external and intentionally produced) and even quite spurious ones (subjective and projective). According here only to the prototypical atmospheres:

1) it’s impossible to consider emotional dimensions as reifying, since their spatiality is toto coelo different from the local-thingly one. In short, atmospheric feelings cause an illicit reification only for those who admit the sole existence of a physical, geometrical, dimensional space on the one hand, as well as the existence of things as cohesive and discrete entities on the other.

2) What’s subjective in my approach, then, is simply the perception of an atmosphere in its own specific space (predimensional, surface-free, populated not just by things, but rather by quasi-things). Shame, for example, consists of an atmospheric involvement coming from the outside and that is my own not because “I” own it, but rather because it assaults me. The only relative different perception of an atmospheric feeling can be explained by a somewhat different kind of “filtering” process, which corresponds to the different felt-bodily dispositions and degree of personal emancipation of the different subjects.

3) Another claim might be that this objectivity of feelings entails that all the feelings should be constantly present in the given space. However, this can be true only if we both disregard the typically intermittent state of atmospheric feelings: in fact they come and go and (like the wind and unlike the things in a strict sense) we cannot wonder where they’ve been.

4) One further objection is that the desubjectification of feelings prevents them from being localized within the lived-body: but in this case we may reply that the felt-bodily dimension is not integrally singularized, that it’s not anything private I can own and control, but instead something in which sometimes (as in the case of the atmosphere of holy-day relaxation) the felt-body dissolves in a real felt-bodily communication (with the inorganic too).
To begin with, we are very glad to tell you, that OEVG has been reaccredited for further five years as Austrian NOGT in EAGT. We want to express our gratitude to all who have contributed to this extensive work!

Participating in the conference in Taormina was a big pleasure for me. On the one hand, the wonderful location being a travel destination in its own right and on the other hand, the amazing organisation of that enormous event including the process groups, which was an opportunity to meet with very interesting and likeable people. It was a particular pleasure for us to realise that many colleagues from Austria were also joining the conference reflecting the remarkable rise of ordinary individual EAGT members from Austria during the last five years!

Following the idea that was discussed in Rotterdam at the March 2016 meeting to create a closer connection to accredited training institutes to EAGT we seized the suggestion and invited the Austrian TIs to a common meeting that took place only a few weeks ago in November 2016. In our experience, it was a first promising step to a closer cooperation between OEVG and all the Gestalttherapy trainings institutes in Austria with the aim to promote Gestalttherapy in Austria in common projects. That meeting also included colleagues from the institute for Gestalt Theoretical Psychotherapy in Vienna.

The last months have been very busy for OEVG hosting many activities. In June we had a book presentation with Ursula Müller and Marion Waldenmair about Ursula’s book on patchwork-families.

In October Nancy Amendt-Lyon presented her book “Timeless Experience. Laura Perls’s Unpublished Notebooks and Literary Texts 1946-1985”, that had gained a lot of resonance after having been presented at the Taormina conference.

In November Otto Glanzer from Augsburg, Germany gave a workshop on „Modern Gestalttherapy and Depression” organised by OEVG followed by a lecture on the same topic at the Austrian Society of Medical Doctors in Vienna. It was a great opportunity to present Gestalttherapy to a wider public within the realm of the Austrian health care system.

The prospects for our next events are interesting as well.

Our December Jour fixe on the topic “What happened to the ‘Welcoming Culture’ from 2015 towards refugees in Austria?” Three colleagues will report on their engagement with refugees in Austria.

We are looking forward to the next book presentation in January of “Women in Gestalt Therapy. Historical Reflections and Future Prospects in Contemporary Interviews” edited by Adriena Feckova and Beatrix Wimmer.

Hoping to survive that Christmas-time and wishing you the very same I look forward to see you all in Amsterdam.

Warm wishes,

Bernhard Thosold, OEVG

UNITED KINGDOM

Jacqui Lichtenstern

UKAGP Chair

A brief update from the UK, where many of us are still reeling from the referendum results; at this time membership of
EAGT feels very important.

**CONSULTATIVE GROUP**
The UKAGP Consultative Group has met three times since it was set up in 2014. Delegates from fourteen Gestalt organisations in the UK come together to explore areas of shared interest and concern, in a dialogic space. We meet twice a year in between the EAGT General Board meetings, as one of the purposes was to have provide a space for two-way feedback.

Shared interests and concerns that we explore have included: collaboration between institutes whilst recognising a certain level of competition exists too, developing a new generation of trainers, challenges involved in finding external examiners and moderators, supporting emerging writers, accessing EAGT membership and involvement in the wider community, developing connections with Gestalt educators, coaches, organisational practitioners and consultants.

**ONLINE JOURNAL INITIATIVE**
One of our trainee members initiated an exciting grassroots project inspired by dialogue at the UKAGP Trainee Day this summer, which has received international support on the kickstarter campaign to raise funds to create a web-based Gestalt journal for new Gestalt writing hosted by students for students. This will be a place to experiment and dialogue, and to develop the support for essays to become published articles - more info here: [http://kck.st/2hlvbUz](http://kck.st/2hlvbUz)

**CONFERENCE 2017**
UKAGP’s next conference will be ‘Celebrating Our Community’, marking the 25th anniversary of the British Gestalt Journal, with a creative and innovative programme planned, providing an innovative opportunity for Gestalt practitioners to engage together in a distinctive ‘learning and research’ experiential gathering.

We are also delighted that AAGT will be holding their AGM following our conference, and hope that it is as successful as a similar venture we had with EAGT in London in 2014. More details and booking options: [http://ukagp.org.uk/celebrating-our-community/](http://ukagp.org.uk/celebrating-our-community/)

We hope some of you will join us there!

*Jacqui Lichtenstern*

**GERMANY**

*Olaf Zielke*  
DVG  

Pforzheim, where Laura Perls was born and grew up her first years and where Laura and Fritz are buried. It was very interesting and touching to see some of the places and traces of her life.

The conference had about 350 participants and was about „health and quality of life in times of change”; and it was to celebrate 30 years of DVG and 65 years of Gestalt therapy.

Our next conference will be in June 2017, together with the Austrian and Swiss association as a „DACH” conference. The subject will be about the core-competencies in the gestalt therapy.

And, finally, the German version of the book „Gestalt therapy in clinical practice” is published and now available!

*Olaf Zielke*

**ITALY**

*Rosanna Biasi*  
SIPG

Dear Colleagues,

After the organization of Taormina Conference, which was a great effort for the Italian NOGT, we are organizing with Italian Federation of Gestalt Institutes (FISIG) a conference in April 27-30, 2017, about the research in Gestalt Therapy. In this conference a research by Madeleine Fogarty...
for the validation and reliability of the GTFS (Gestalt Therapy Fidelity Scale) will be presented; all institutes which belong to the Italian Federation of Gestalt Institutes joined and are working together. Moreover, each Italian Institute will present their own researches.

Another important event has been the agreement made in November by the three main organizations of Gestalt therapy in Italy (including SIPG) with the aim of a larger representativeness of Italian NOGT in Europe. The three associations will meet before and after each EAGT meeting to discuss the topics issued.

Rosanna Biasi  
President Italian Association for Gestalt Therapy (SIPG)

POLAND  
Renata Mizerska  
PTPG

Dear colleagues and friends,

2016 Is nearly up and I would like to share with you some good news from Poland.

First in September 2016 PTPG has become OM as NOGT! After many months we were able to change the statutes and finalize this important process. This will strengthen our community and PTPG as national organization while working on legal regulations and talking to official bodies. I would like to express my gratitude to members of PTPG and all who contributed to this success!

We can proudly report about some interesting events in our organization.

Now the book “Gestalt Therapy in Clinical Practice” edited by Gianni Francesetti, Michela Gecele and Jan Roubal is available in Polish language! Many thanks to all editors and authors. I’m grateful to Gianni Francesetti and to the EAGT for the support which helped me to do this route as the leader of “The Book Project”. This was a big challenge: 4 translators, 53 people from Polish speaking Gestalt community involved, more than 1000 emails, over 320 files. We got support from our donors: Training Institute HIPG form Cracow, Training Institute WSPG form Poznań, psychotherapy center “ko-relacje” and two companies Ipsen Poland and WPH. The publishing house Harmonia Universalis supported us with all editorial processes and print. The book got recommendations from 4 Polish professors and recognized non-Gestalt therapists and the foreword was written by prof. K. Drat-Ruszczak. We hope this will help us to grow and will open many doors. It’s an important step for the NOGT and community in Poland. Now we can be more connected with the international, multi-language community.

We appreciate the fact that two international Gestalt teachers accepted our invitation. In February Jan Roubal will visit Poland with a seminar on depressive experiences. This will be a great opportunity for us to meet in Warsaw and learn together. June 2017 will bring Gianni Francesetti for one day workshop and the 3rd PSIP International Conference “Integration of Psychotherapy in the Disintegrated World”. We are looking forward!

In the end I wish you all Happy New Year!

Warmly,

Renata Mizerska  
President, PTPG

Redakcja naukowa:  
Gianni Francesetti  
Michela Gecele  
Jan Roubal

Przepis: Leslie S. Greenberg

PSYCHOTHERAPIA GESTALT W PRAKTYCE KLINICZNEJ  
OD PSYCHOPATOLOGII DO ESTETYKI KONTAKTU

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### New Members from June 6, 2016

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### Abbreviations explained:

- **OM** = Ordinary Membership (formerly called full membership)
- **AM** = Associate Membership
- **GPO** = Gestalt Practitioner in Organisations
- **GPOA** = Associate Gestalt Practitioner in Organisations
The Annual General Meeting in September 2017 will be held in Bucharest in Romania.

Enjoy the album of pictures here from this beautiful site:
ENVIRONMENT FOR NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Stavropoleos Church

Village Museum

Village Museum

Village Museum
We say farewell to 2016 and hope for a happy 2017 that will bring light and hope to the world!

Abbreviations in the whole newsletter explained

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<td>EAP</td>
<td>European Association for Psychotherapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>EAGT Ethics Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>General Board (Executive Committee and Representatives of European NOGT members)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPO</td>
<td>Gestalt Practitioner in Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR&amp;SR</td>
<td>Human Rights &amp; Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM</td>
<td>Individual Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOGT</td>
<td>National Organizations for Gestalt Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OM</td>
<td>Ordinary Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>OrM</td>
<td>Organizational Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC&amp;QS</td>
<td>Professional Competences &amp; Qualitative Standards</td>
</tr>
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<td>Training Institute</td>
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<tr>
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<td>National Organization for Gestalt Therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>EWAO</td>
<td>European Wide Accrediting Organization</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Peace Brigades International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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