



Special issue
**Music therapy in Europe:
 Paths of professional development**

in partnership with the
 European Music Therapy Confederation



AUSTRIA

Country report on professional recognition of music therapy

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HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Training courses

The beginning of music therapy in Austria dates back to the late 1950s, making Austria one of the pioneering countries for music therapy in Europe. In 1959, the first music therapy training course opened at the Vienna Academy of Music and Performing Arts (now the [University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna](#)). In the early 1960s, music therapy was implemented in departments of psychiatry and in the care of people with special needs as a new therapeutic approach. Alfred Schmölz, leader of the training programme from 1970 until 1992, introduced music therapy in the field of psychosomatics. In that period, theoretical and practical changes took place with emphasis on active methods, on the importance of the therapeutic relationship, on self-experience and supervised practical training. Since psychotherapy was newly recognised as a registered healthcare profession in the 1990s, psychotherapeutic approaches also gained in importance within music therapy. In 2003, the music therapy programme was turned into an eight-semester, full academic training with a master-equivalent degree. In October 2013, Austria's first PhD training course in music therapy was implemented at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. The programmes are headed by child and adolescent psychiatrist and music therapist Thomas Stegemann.

In 2009, at the [IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems](#) the bachelor degree programme started, followed by a master degree programme in 2012. The training programme has its roots in Traditional Oriental Music Therapy and has developed in steps to fit in the local conditions of the Austrian healthcare. The music therapy approach incorporates findings from medical, psychological and music therapy research as well as concepts and ideas from the field of social and cultural

anthropology. The programme places emphasis on the fields of intensive care, neuro-rehabilitation, on stress regulation and music therapy research. The programmes are headed by social and cultural anthropologist and music therapist Gerhard Tucek.

In 2010, the youngest of the current three training programmes in Austria started at the [University of Arts Graz](#) conducted as a cooperative project together with the Medical University Graz. It is based on a humanistic-anthropological idea of health and has a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual background, integrating music therapy concepts with musical-artistic, psychological and psychotherapeutic approaches. The programme is headed by physician, psychotherapist and music therapist Monika Glawischnig-Goschnik, social pedagogue and music therapist Christian Münzberg, and psychiatrist, psychotherapist and music therapist Urs Rüegg.

Associations and organisations

The [Austrian Association of Music Therapists](#) (ÖBM) was founded in 1984. Since its foundation, the ÖBM's main goals have been to represent the interests of music therapists working in Austria and to reach recognition for music therapy within the Austrian healthcare system. As part of its event organisation activities, ÖBM hosted the annual meetings of the EMTC in Vienna together with the Viennese Institute of Music Therapy (WIM) in May 2009 and May 2011. ÖBM is a member of the World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT), of the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC), and of the "Gesundheitsberufekonferenz" (a consortium of associations of Austria's recognised healthcare professions). Together with the WIM and the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, and supported by the training courses in Krems and Graz as well as by the Association of Ethno Music Therapy, ÖBM will host the 10th European Music Therapy Conference in Vienna in July 2016. The current chair of the ÖBM board is Monika Geretsegger.

The [Association of Ethno Music Therapy](#) (BfEM, Berufsverband für Ethno-Musiktherapie) was founded in 2010. BfEM is a member of the WFMT and hosted the 14th World Congress of Music Therapy in Krems in July 2014. The current chair is Iris Zoderer.

The [Viennese Institute of Music Therapy](#) (WIM, Wiener Institut für Musiktherapie), founded in 1997, is a private institute with members who are involved in practical clinical work as well as theoretical and research work. Amongst others, the WIM has edited a series of books, *Wiener Beiträge zur Musiktherapie* [Viennese Contributions to Music Therapy] published by Edition Praesens/Vienna, which describes the "Viennese School of Music Therapy", its tradition, clinical practice, research, and the integration of new theories; to date, 11 volumes have been published in this series. The WIM is a member of the EMTC and its board is currently chaired by Elena Fitzthum.

The [Institute for Ethno Music Therapy](#) (Institut für Ethno-Musiktherapie) was founded in 1999 by Gerhard

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Tucek. The institute's purpose includes developing the therapeutic potential of music from different cultural backgrounds based on practical applications in scientifically grounded ways, and acting as an expert organisation with regards to culture-sensitive practices in music therapy training, clinical practice and research. The Institute is building bridges between music therapy, music medicine, and research on the effects of music in general (e.g. the "Mozart & Science" congresses in 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012). The Institute for Ethno Music Therapy is headed by Gerhard Tucek.

RECOGNITION AND APPROVAL

Music therapy as a recognised health profession

The efforts of the Austrian music therapists to establish a legal status for music therapists came to a joyful end when the Austrian Music Therapy Law was passed in Parliament in June 2008. It was the end of decades-long attempts and setbacks and brought music therapy the status of a certified health profession.

The Music Therapy Law defines two types of professional qualification: music therapists who are entitled to work independently (based on a master qualification in music therapy), and those who have a jointly responsible occupational qualification (based on a bachelor qualification in music therapy). Music therapists in Austria have to fulfil certain criteria (regarding training, occupational duties, etc.) to be registered in the official Music Therapists List run by the Ministry of Health. At the time of writing this report (October 2014), there are 318 music therapists registered in Austria. For further information about the Austrian Music Therapy Law, see Mössler (2008).

Fields of work and employment

Today, music therapy is practised in many sectors of the healthcare system in Austria. In a recent survey conducted by the Austrian Association of Music Therapy (Geretsegger, Böhm-Öppinger & Schmidtmayr 2012), we found that adult mental health is by far the largest field of work, comprising 30.5% of all music therapy employments in Austria when adults with psychiatric and psychosomatic disorders are taken together; 24.6% of all music therapy employments in Austria are in the treatment of children and adolescents with developmental disorders, behavioural problems and psychiatric disorders. Other large client groups for music therapists in Austria are people with mental and/or physical handicaps (11.2%) and the elderly/people in hospices (10.7%). More than a quarter (26.8%) of all Austrian music therapy employments can be found in hospitals, followed by the categories private practice (22.3%) and outpatient clinic (15.0%).

Current challenges

The Austrian Music Therapy Law is an essential basis for the profession and has brought a lot of improvements, but it has not yet solved some essential problems. For example, music therapy services in private practice are not funded or subsidised by health insurance yet, so many clients and families who would need music therapy outside of institutional contexts cannot afford it. Music therapy organisations in Austria are therefore currently engaged in joint efforts to find ways of obtaining public funding for services provided by freelance music therapists.

SELECTED LINKS

- ❑ Association of Ethno Music Therapy: www.bfem.at/en/
- ❑ Austrian Association of Music Therapists (ÖBM): www.oebm.org
- ❑ EMTC country information: <http://emtc-eu.com/country-reports/austria/>
- ❑ IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems: www.fh-krems.ac.at/en/studying/master/music-therapy/overview/#.VLLZSiuG_To
- ❑ Institute for Ethno Music Therapy: www.ethnomusik.com
- ❑ University of Arts Graz: www.impg.at/gramuth/
- ❑ University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna: www.mdw.ac.at/mbm/mth/
- ❑ Viennese Institute of Music Therapy: www.wim-musiktherapie.at

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- Geretsegger, M., Böhm-Öppinger, S., & Schmidtmayr, B. (2012). *Zur beruflichen Situation von MusiktherapeutInnen in Österreich – Ergebnisse einer Erhebung*. Vienna: Austrian Association of Music Therapists.