



Special issue

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

in partnership with the  
European Music Therapy Confederation



## SLOVENIA

### Country report on professional recognition of music therapy

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#### HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

It is difficult to speak about the history of music therapy in Slovenia as it is not far away from the present. The pioneers in our country are all alive and we know each other. We might be different generations but at the same time we are also colleagues. Similarly to other European countries there were teachers and doctors in schools and hospitals who were using music as a means to connect with their students or patients, but there are no relevant names or literature about this pre-music therapy time. Vida Celarec, Professor of Musicology, was the first, who started to implement active music therapy techniques and clinical improvisation in her work at the psychiatric hospital in Ljubljana. Her work started in 1980s and with time she was employed as music therapist, even though there was no regulation for the profession at that time. At a similar time, a team of four professors from the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana started to train in the arts therapies in the Netherlands with the intention to start a training programme for arts therapies at their faculty. Each of them covered a different modality: music, dance, drama and art. In 1992, the first training programme for arts therapies was founded at that faculty, called 'Help with Arts – Art Therapy', the Head of this programme was Breda Kroflič. Many generations of arts therapists were educated in this postgraduate training, but only four in the modality of music. With the change to the Bologna system the concept of the programme had to be drastically changed and the focus on the therapeutic content was replaced with pedagogic subjects and the music therapy direction particularly lost all its importance. Nevertheless in the Slovenian Association for Arts Therapists (SZUT) around 30 members are forming a group of young professionals who are trying to set up the standards. This association is the only one in the country related to music therapy and has its own section for

music therapy (four members), which is also a member of the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC).

The overall situation at universities in Slovenia worsened a few years ago and closed the doors for new music therapy education for quite some time into the future. Following this political situation, the idea of a private music therapy programme within an independent institute was brought to life in September 2014, when the two qualified music therapists who gained their qualification abroad, Špela Loti Knoll and Claudia Knoll, founded the 'IK – Institute Knoll for Music Therapy and Supervision' in Kranj, Slovenia. The first generation of music therapy students started in October 2014 with a three-year part-time study, which is based on the international standards for MA music therapy education and therefore opens new possibilities for this profession in Slovenia. This course is supported by the Andreas-Tobias-Kind-Foundation in Hamburg and cooperates with the leaders of other music therapy trainings in Europe. Forming a properly educated, critical number of music therapists is essential in our country in order to provide music therapy, which will benefit a large number of different client groups as well as establishing music therapy as a recognised profession.

#### RECOGNITION AND APPROVAL

The SZUT in cooperation with the Faculty of Education and the 'Help with Arts' training programme started to make the first steps in terms of recognition. Until now arts therapies (meaning all modalities including music, dance, art and drama) are recognised as a health profession and are listed in the Slovenian health programme, but there are no legal grounds for this profession yet. The title is still not protected by law and the services are not paid directly from health insurance. There are some examples which show otherwise but these are exceptions. With the negative changes in the 'Help with Arts' training, this procedure is also put on hold. The new private course aims to provide new input in this direction, also by encouraging research and publishing relevant literature in the Slovenian language. But there is still much to be done and we need more music therapists who will put their energy and enthusiasm into this work. For Slovenia it is important to have a reference such as the European Music Therapy Register (EMTR) for further development and new standards in music therapy.

#### SELECTED LINKS

- IK – Institute Knoll for Music Therapy and Supervision:  
[www.institutknoll.eu](http://www.institutknoll.eu)
- Slovenian Association for Arts Therapists (SZUT):  
[www.szut.si](http://www.szut.si)

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