

The European Talent Centre in Budapest has opened its gates

In 2008, Hungarian Parliament passed the 20-year National Talent Programme by a strong majority. The Programme enjoying the support of both the public and the non-profit sector is special in that it organises the talent support traditions of several centuries into a coherent system and promotes, *inter alia*, the establishment of a national talent support network. The Hungarian co-operation network initiative has attracted attention at EU level and this has led to the establishment of the European Talent Centre Budapest which started operation in July 2012 under the aegis of the Association of Hungarian Talent Support Organisations.

Budapest, 20 September 2012 – The European Talent Centre - Budapest (EUTCB), so far the only institution of its kind, was formed in response to the need for establishing European Talent Centres (EUTCs), expressed first at the International Talent Support Conference held as part of the Hungarian EU Presidency in 2011. In the Final Declaration of the event, talent support professionals and decision-makers, including Hungarian Minister of State for Education *Rózsa Hoffmann*, proposed “to establish a European Talent Centre in Budapest to support, co-ordinate and monitor the common European talent support activities”.

The operation of the European Talent Centre - Budapest is funded from Grant Scheme No. NTP-EU-M-12 announced by the National Talent Programme. HUF 30 million is available to finance the activities of the Centre in the preparatory phase lasting until November 2012.

Networking in Hungarian and European talent support

There is a plethora of parental, school-based and social talent support methods, all of which are driven by the realisation, whether based on tradition or on a conscious or unconscious decision that **excellence represents value** and it is to be recognised and respected.

Hungarian talent support and especially its achievements in the past years excel in European comparison. The long-term (20-year) Hungarian talent support strategy as well as the so-called talent point network model have raised considerable attention in Europe ever since their inception. Hungarian talent support professionals had joined the common European workshop activities focusing on the practice of talent support already before the accession of the country. Co-operation has gathered strength after 2004, and **Hungary acquired a lead role in talent support**. Joint work has resulted so far in a series of important European talent support conferences organised in Hungary, activities under the Hungarian Genius Programme for collecting and disseminating domestic and international best practices, and the establishment of **European Talent Centre - Budapest** as a follow-up of Hungary's foreign relations activities so far¹. Internationally renowned Professor **Péter Csermely**, Member of Academia Europaea, who was elected president of ECHA (European Council for High Ability) last week played a key role in initiating the establishment of the Centre.

Objectives of the European Talent Centre - Budapest

As expressed by **Csilla Fuszek**, President of EUTCB, “The establishment of the Centre was driven by two essential ideas. The first is, to quote *Mihály Csikszentmihályi*, the tenet that, ‘*talent development is a key task for preserving the human values ...*’, and the second is, to quote the same author, that ‘*it makes an enormous difference for children whether they live in an environment where talent is appreciated and everything is done to develop it, or in one that lets talent lie fallow*’. These two ideas could be the motto of **EUTC**: the European talent

¹ Talent support EU Hungarian Presidency Conference and First European Day for the Talented and the Gifted, 7-8 April 2011. See: <http://geniuszportal.hu/content/tehetseggondozas-eu-magyar-elnoksegi-konferencia-es-első-europai-tehetsegnap>

network itself will actually be the output of the joint work of European professionals agreeing with these statements.

The long-term goal of ETCB formed in summer 2012 is to contribute on the basis of the success of the Hungarian co-operation model to **organising the European talent support actors into an open and flexible network overarching the countries of Europe.**

Tasks of the European Talent Centre - Budapest

ETCB's mission is to offer the organisations and individuals active in an isolated, latent form or in a minor network a framework structure and an opportunity to work together to achieve the following:

- to provide talent support an emphasis commensurate with its importance in every European country,
- to reduce talent loss to the minimum in Europe,
- to give talent support a priority role in the transformation of the sector of education; to provide talented young persons access to the most adequate forms of education in every Member State,
- to make Europe attractive for the talented youth,
- to create talent-friendly societies in every European country.

It is particularly important that **network hubs** setting targets similar to those of the European Talent Centre in Budapest should proliferate in the longer term.

The first six months represent the first phase of the work: we shall lay the bases for establishing the **European Talent Support Network**. The expected key result is to set up a team of voluntary experts from all over Europe who will contribute to that work and help draw the **European talent map**.

Another part of the tasks concern the representation abroad of the Hungarian example and, in parallel, contact-keeping abroad. In the spirit of the foregoing, the staff members of the Centre will be present in the autumn at several **European conferences**, and several **foreign delegations** (Polish, Lithuanian, Chinese) interested in the operation of the Hungarian network and the Hungarian traditions of talent support have announced their intention to visit us in the months to come.

The functions of the Centre will include the further collection of international best practices and their publication in on-line and/or paper-based format. *“Two volumes are scheduled to appear in the near future: an anthology of best practices in talent support in **Europe** and one of the best practices of the Carpathian Basin (East Central Europe). One of the first events organised by the Centre will combine the presentation of the volume on East Central Europe with a **conference** which would also serve as a meeting for the cross border talent points existing already, and soon after, also this year, an **enterprise roundtable** will be organised where companies can present their best practices”, Csilla Fuszek added.*

Our English website at <http://www.talentcentrebudapest.eu> envisages to display best practices in talent support in the field of education and also the corresponding internal endeavours of foreign large companies present in Hungary. This is an unprecedented initiative in Europe, and familiarisation with the talent identification and talent development strategies of the corporate sector, more responsive to the challenges ever, will certainly be an interesting and enriching experience for the public education sector.