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MeetingDem Newsletter

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Great start of MeetingDem's final project year!

May 2015 the first Meeting Centre for people with dementia and their carers within the MeetingDem project was opened in Milan. Now, one year later, already ten (!) Meeting Centres are operational in the MeetingDem project. Six centres in Italy, one in Wroclaw, Poland, which has a large waiting list, and three in the United Kingdom. That is much more than originally expected (at least one Meeting Centre per country). Many people and organizations who attended the 'pioneer workshops' organized in these countries for dissemination purposes, have indicated that they were interested in opening a Meeting Centre in their own region as well. We therefore expect that more Meeting Centres will open their doors in this final year of the MeetingDem project!

Opening Meeting Centre in Leominster, UK

After Droitwich Spa, the Leominster Meeting Centre is the second Meeting Centre in the UK. It opened its doors on the 1st of February 2016. Though the official launch took place on May 3rd 2016, already 31 people were welcomed in this new Centre.



Leominster Meeting Centre staff Yvie George and Tracey Exell

Party and exhibition organized by the Bologna Meeting Centre

For the national "Caregiver Day", on May 25, the Meeting Centre of Bologna organized a party with a beautiful exhibition. Some weeks before the party, an art lab was held by an artist, Marco. The environment was stimulating, but very relaxed, to ensure that all the participants – regardless of their specific abilities – were totally free to express themselves. They could choose from different printed faces, expressing different emotions (e.g. happiness vs. sadness); then they coloured the chosen face and thought of a sentence, or just a word, to express their current feelings. This work encouraged their creative thinking and people loved the creative freedom. The paintings were exhibited at the MC party! During the party a band played folk and popular music; the musicians were nice in involving the participants in dancing and singing, as in a karaoke. After the entertainment there were snacks "fit for a king": pizzas, savoury pies, jam tarts, homemade cookies and pastries! About 70 people attended the party. The party is briefly described here (in Italian) : <https://ciditalia.wordpress.com/2016/05/28/racconto-di-una-festa/>



Activities in Wroclaw Meeting Centre

The Wroclaw Meeting Centre has successfully organized various activities, lectures and trips this Spring. The participants of the Meeting Centre took a swim in an aqua park, paid a visit to a botanical park and attended an event performed by children from a

primary school to celebrate Mother's Day. In June the participants performed in a traditional folklore dancing-show.



Film Droitwich Spa Meeting Centre

In May a very impressive film on the Droitwich Spa Meeting Centre was launched. In this film participants of the Meeting Centre explain how they experience the combined support program. Also several other stakeholders have their say about the background of the program and their motivation for setting up the meeting centre. Click [here](#) to view the film trailer.



Pioneer workshops

In the spring of 2016 several pioneer workshops were organized in Italy, Poland and the UK for representatives of care and welfare organizations who are interested in implementing the Meeting Centre Support Program (MCSP) in their own region. The aim of the pioneer workshops is to stimulate the national dissemination of the MCSP model in the three countries.

The UK team successfully organized six workshops in different parts of the country. For some workshops there was even a waiting list! The Polish team organized two small informative workshops in which basic knowledge on MCSP was provided, information on how this model is adapted and implemented in Wroclaw, and the first experiences with running a Meeting Centre. The next pioneer workshop is planned on 26 November in Wroclaw, which will include also a visit to the Meeting Centre and a psychomotor therapy session. In Italy, two pioneer workshops will be organized. One in Bologna on 17 November 2016 and a one in Cesena, of which the date is not yet set.

MeetingDem successfully presented at EU conference

MeetingDem was invited to present at the international conference 'Living well with(out) dementia' which took place on 9-10 May in Amsterdam in relation to the Netherlands Presidency of the European council. Delegates of many countries inside and outside Europe were present. Prof. Rose-Marie Dröes, coordinator of the project, explained the vision, aims and methodology of the Meeting Centres Support Programme and presented the first results of the project as achieved in the new meeting centres which are recently successfully set up in Italy, Poland and the UK. The conference was also the start of the national campaign Together dementia friendly.nl.

Warm welcome for MeetingDem team in UK Meeting Centre

During the annual International MeetingDem project meeting, this time held on 15-16 April in Worcester (UK), the project team was invited to the Droitwich Spa Meeting Centre for a typical English 'Fish and Chips' lunch. It was a very warm welcome by all members, personnel and volunteers of the centre. It gave the project partners of the different countries the opportunity to discuss with the participants themselves how they valued the Meeting Centre. There was a festive atmosphere and you could feel that all involved were proud of their centre!



MeetingDem team visiting the Droitwich Spa Meeting Centre

Meeting Centres also active outside Europe!

In He Fei City, the very centre of He Fei in China, are living more than 1 million elderly people. A substantial number of them are disabled or having dementia. In general, these older people stay in their home and nobody talks openly about their disease. Dr. Li ZhiQiang, the director of An Hui She Jia Healthcare, has great attention for the quality of the services for older people in the region. For this reason, in January 2016 he visited Meeting Centre De Pijp in Amsterdam, where he attended a training on working according to

the Meeting centres vision, which Mrs. Joke Bos, manager of the centre, had specifically organized for health care delegates from China. He then invited Mrs. Bos to come to He Fei to give a two weeks training for workers and staff. In September 2016 they will start a first Meeting centre in He Fei, which will also provide rehabilitation for older people who had a stroke.



Joke Bos in He Fei, China

Internship of Italian student at VUmc, the Netherlands

Floriana Mangiaracina, a master student Applied Cognitive Psychology from the University of Bologna, is doing her internship within the MeetingDem project at the VUmc in Amsterdam. She is working on a paper about the first phase of implementation, the so called preparation phase, of the Meeting Centres in different European countries: Italy, Poland, and the United Kingdom. She investigated factors that facilitate or impede the preparation phase and the efficacy of the working method. Results show that factors facilitating the process were: added value of MCSP over usual care, attunement to needs of the target group, evidence of effectiveness of MCSP and enthusiasm of stakeholders. Barriers were: competition with existing care and welfare organizations and scarce funding. Some countries experienced improved collaboration with care and welfare organizations, and others had difficulties finding a suitable location. The working method to implement MCSP is practicable and effective for all the countries. All countries opened at least one MCSP.

The paper has been submitted to an international scientific journal. Floriana will be working on the MeetingDem project until September 2016.

Network of interest in Meeting Centres

Right from the start of the MeetingDem project we keep a list of stakeholders/ organisations who are interested in setting up Meeting Centres in their own

region or country. This list is growing and contains organisations from the partner countries (Italy, Poland, UK) as well as from other European countries (Belgium, Spain, Czech Republic) and countries outside Europe (Japan, Chile). We will keep these stakeholders informed via this newsletter and of course via our website. Our MeetingDem website (meetingdem.eu) is also regularly visited by the countries mentioned, but also by visitors from e.g. US, China, Russia and Germany. If people are interested in our project progress and results, please go the website and register yourself, then we will keep you informed!

What to expect the coming period?

The focus during the final eight months of the project will be on collecting and analysing data to study the (cost)effectiveness of MCSP on various outcomes, such as: depression, quality of life of the person with dementia, experienced stigma, and feeling of competence of the carers. Besides data among participants of MCSP data will be collected among people with dementia and carers who use 'care as usual'. Also satisfaction of participants with the MCSP will be gauged. Concerning the implementation process, data will be collected and analysed on the implementation and continuation phase. Finally also further opportunities for funding the MCSP in the longer run will be explored. All study results will be described in scientific and professional journals.

Where to find the Meeting Centres?

For contact details and more information on the Meeting Centres in the different EU countries, please visit our website www.meetingdem.eu.

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