

REPORT

The process of the legislative regulation of the music therapy profession in Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

On 5th May 2022, a law on the registration of music therapists and other related matters [N.68(1)2022] was unanimously ratified by the House of Representatives in Cyprus. This report describes in detail the process that the Cyprus Music Therapy Association (CyMTA) followed in order to achieve legislative regulation of the music therapy profession. Before analysing the regulation process, we present a short introduction to Cyprus' history to clarify the particular political situation of the country. Then, we provide a historical review of the development of music therapy and the music therapy profession in Cyprus. Finally, we describe the Cypriot constitutional framework, as the statutory consolidation of the music therapy profession in Cyprus was mainly achieved through constitutional procedures.

KEYWORDS

Cyprus,
music therapy law,
statutory
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CYPRUS: A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Cyprus, officially called the Republic of Cyprus, is an island country in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. It is the third biggest island in the Mediterranean, and is east of Greece, south of Turkey, west of Syria and north of Egypt (WorldAtlas, 2018). Throughout its long history and due to its strategically

important location, Cyprus had been conquered by a number of foreign powers, the last one being the British Empire from 1878 until 1960 (Campbell, 2003).

The year 1960 was a landmark in Cyprus' long history because for the first time, it became an independent and sovereign state for all the inhabitants of the island, where about 78% Greek Cypriots, 18% Turkish Cypriots, 1% Maronites, Armenians and Latins, and 3% others lived. However, disagreements over the 1960 constitution led to intercommunal conflict between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities and the withdrawal of Turkish Cypriots into enclaves in 1963 (Countrystudies.us, 1963).

In July 1974, a coup d'état, backed by the military junta in power in Greece, overturned the democratically elected government, forcing the Cypriot President to flee (Mallinson, 2005). This action precipitated the Turkish invasion of Cyprus on 20th July, which led to the occupation of the present-day territory of occupied Cyprus (north part). The Republic of Cyprus is de facto partitioned into two main parts: the area under the effective control of the Republic, located in the south and west, comprises about 58% of the island's area; and the north (occupied Cyprus), administered by the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, covers about 37% of the island's area. The remaining 5% of the island is covered by the United Nations (UN) buffer zone and the Sovereign Base Areas (SBA) of Akrotiri and Dhekelia, which remain under the United Kingdom's control (McArthur et al., 2018).

After a long and turbulent political journey, on 1st May 2004, Cyprus joined the European Union. Under the terms of its accession, the entire island is technically considered to be a member of the European Union, despite its continued division and the fact that the government of the Republic has no effective authority over the northern part of the island (Ker-Lindsay et al., 2011).

Based on this brief historical overview, we clarify that when we refer to Cyprus in this report, we mean the officially recognised southern part only. Thus, we focus on the process towards the legal recognition of the music therapy profession as practised in the areas controlled by the official government of Cyprus.

MUSIC THERAPY IN CYPRUS: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Music therapy in Cyprus started its life in 1987, when Anthi Agrotou, the first Cypriot music therapist, returned from her music therapy studies from the United Kingdom and created the first music therapy work position at 'Nea Eleousa', an institution for people with severe learning disabilities.

In 1999, a new 'Law on Special Education' [N.113(1)/99], was put into practice and for the first time, the Ministry of Education and Culture employed music therapists in public schools for Special Education. A major contributing factor was that during the preparation for the legislation, Agrotou was a member of the research committee, "Special Committee for Studying of Ways of Providing Assistance to Children with Special Needs", which was appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1992). The committee's report, delivered in the autumn of 1992, formed the basis of Law 113(1)/99, which included most of the children with learning disabilities in regular schools (Agrotou, 2008). The inclusion of music therapy in the therapeutic programme of public schools for Special Education was a very important step, as it represented the first substantial recognition of the music therapy profession in Cyprus.

Since then, jobs were created in institutions for profoundly learning-disabled children and adults, such as psychiatric units and elderly care homes. However, the majority of music therapists in Cyprus work with children and adolescents with learning disabilities in public schools for Special Education or as self-employed music therapists in the private sector.

In 2023, the number of qualified music therapists in Cyprus reached about 35. All of them are graduates of educational programmes (bachelor's or master's level) from abroad such as the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, and Austria, as there is no music therapy training programme in the country. It is worth noting that from 2008 to 2016, music therapists who were graduates of postgraduate programmes were excluded from the employment contracts of the Ministry of Education and Culture and could not work in public schools for Special Education. This was attributed to the fact that The Ministry of Education Employment Contracts require a Bachelor's Degree in Music Therapy.

The multiplicity of approaches as well as the exclusion of music therapists with a postgraduate degree generated the need for an official registration, in coordination with state legislation, for all practising music therapists in Cyprus. In order to address this need, the Cyprus Music Therapy Association (CyMTA) was formed in 2010 to promote music therapy and make suggestions towards state legislation that would govern the registration of music therapists and other relevant issues. Other landmarks in the development of music therapy in Cyprus were in 2011, when CyMTA became a member of the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC) and in 2020, when CyMTA joined the World Federation of Music Therapy (WFMT).¹

THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF CYPRUS

Cyprus is a republic with a presidential system of government, where the President of Cyprus is both head of state and head of government, and executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is held by both the government and the parliament (House of Representatives), and the judiciary is an independent body of the state.

Accordingly, the House of Representatives is the legislative body. Its legislative function consists of establishing, amending, or abolishing rules of law. Proposed legislation is submitted to Parliament in the form of draft laws (i.e., legislative proposals). The right to propose laws belongs to the parliamentarians. Every draft law submitted to Parliament must be accompanied by a statement of reasons, i.e., an explanatory report that accompany the adoption, amendment, or repeal of relevant legislation.

Aimed at carrying out parliamentary work in a more orderly manner, the Constitution and the House Rules allow for the setting up of committees, the composition of which is decided by the Committee of Selection. Political party groups in the House are duly represented on each parliamentary committee. Parliamentary committees are divided into standing committees, corresponding to the respective Ministries and other temporary, ad hoc, or special committees. In our case, the Committee on Health Affairs was responsible for investigating the legal recognition of the music therapy profession.

¹ Cyprus Music Therapy Association: www.cymta.org

THE PROCESS TOWARDS THE LEGISLATIVE REGULATION OF THE PROFESSION OF THE MUSIC THERAPIST²

The attempts to legislate the music therapy profession began in 2010, by the so-called "Music Therapy Initiative Group"³. The first step in this effort was the drafting of a legislative proposal in collaboration with a lawyer. Then, this legislative proposal and an explanatory report were handed in to the Committee on Health Affairs. In 2013, the CyMTA submitted another legislative proposal to the Committee on Health Affairs. However, all negotiations regarding legislation had been unsuccessful. The process did not proceed mainly because the Cyprus Professional and Scientific Psychological Association (CyPSA) objected, arguing that music therapists are not sufficiently qualified to take on mental health cases. They based their argument on the fact that most music therapists were graduates of two-year postgraduate programmes rather than degrees, ignoring the fact that music therapy was primarily taught in this form in Europe.

In 2020, the CyMTA worked urgently on the legislation. Some of the reasons that immediately necessitated the legislation were: 1) the growing number of music therapists in the country; 2) the increase in demand for music therapy services; and 3) the many complaints about people who presented themselves as music therapists when they were not and worked with vulnerable groups. Unfortunately, due to the lack of legislation, the Association could not intervene, so these people acted unchecked, and 4) the need for the music therapy profession to be included in the National Health System (GESY). Related health professions have already been included in GESY. Only the music therapy profession has been excluded (see Appendix).

During the period from February 2020 to March 2021, CyMTA council members approached parliamentarians (from different political parties) who were members of the Committee on Health Affairs in order to educate them about the importance of regulating the profession of music therapy in Cyprus. Consequently, in March 2021, the Committee on Health Affairs arranged for the first official meeting on music therapy legislation and invited relevant stakeholders to participate, including the Cyprus Ministry of Health, the Cyprus Council of Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications (KY.S.A.T.S.)⁴, the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (M.O.E.C.), the Ministry of Labour, and Social Insurance (M.L.S.I.), the Legal Services, and the CyPSA.

In the first meeting, all the relevant stakeholders expressed their views and concerns about the legislation to the Committee on Health Affairs. Firstly, the representative from the M.O.E.C. supported the necessity of the legislation by stating that: "music therapists have been working for 20 years at public schools for Special Education and it is widely acceptable that they have played a significant role to the therapeutic process of the students with learning disabilities" (House of Representatives, 2021). Secondly, KY.S.A.T.S. pointed out that the legislative proposal should include the same recognition criteria of KY.S.A.T.S. regarding higher education qualifications. Thirdly, the CyPSA raised some concerns mainly about the referral process and the definition of music therapy. CyMTA

² The facts are confirmed by the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Health Affairs, "About Registration of Music Therapists and for Other Related Matters Law of 2021" (see Republic of Cyprus, 2022a).

³ People of this group later created CyMTA.

⁴ KY.S.A.T.S. is the competent authority of the Republic of Cyprus that recognises higher education qualifications.

submitted a memorandum (see Appendix), accompanied by letters of support from doctors, relevant associations, and health facilities that provide music therapy services. At the end, the president of the Committee on Health Affairs announced that the regulation of music therapy profession is important and assigned the configuration of the law to the Legislative Department of the Ministry of Health.

The next important step in the recognition process was the configuration of the law in collaboration with the Legislative Department of the Ministry of Health. CyMTA council members worked closely with the responsible officers from the Ministry of Health and adjusted the legislative proposal following the standards of relevant health professions' laws and regulations. A crucial point in the configuration process of the law was the determination of the academic qualifications which a music therapist should obtain in order to be registered, the definition of music therapy, and the registration board.

Reaching an agreement about the academic qualifications was very difficult since all music therapists in Cyprus come from different training courses. After examining in detail the academic standards of the educational programmes of the majority of music therapy graduates in Cyprus (United Kingdom, Germany, Finland and USA), CyMTA and the legislative department of the Ministry of Health agreed to the following (see Cyprus Law, 2022):

1. "A person is entitled to be registered if he satisfies the Board that he holds a) a university degree or equivalent in music therapy⁵ recognised under the Law on the Recognition of Higher Education Degrees which includes a supervised practical training consistent with the Board's criteria or b) university diploma or equivalent degree in music therapy not recognized under the Law on the Recognition of Higher Education Degrees, which includes supervised practical training that is consistent with the criteria of the Board and a valid license to practice music therapy profession, which is issued by an EU member state or a third country where the profession is legislated" (pp. 857-858)⁶.
2. Music therapy is defined as "the health profession which utilizes evidence-based music therapy practices, which employ the use of music and its elements, in order to achieve individual therapeutic goals for the improvement of social, communication, learning, mental, emotional and physical health and functioning" (p. 854).
3. "The Registration Board will be composed of seven representatives: (a) three registered music therapists who work at the Ministry of Education and practise the profession for at least 3 years, (b) three registered music therapists who work in the private sector and practise the profession for at least 3 years, and (c) one officer from the Ministry of Health" (p. 855).
4. The registered music therapists shall provide evidence of adequate Continuing Professional Development every two years (30 hours minimum).

⁵ Since 2016, KY.S.A.T.S evaluates Master's degrees in Music Therapy through an Equivalency Formula: Bachelor's (in Music) + Master's in Music Therapy = Bachelor's in Music Therapy. This was attributed to the fact that The Ministry of Education Employment Contracts require a Bachelor's Degree in Music Therapy.

⁶ In this case, music therapists who are graduates of postgraduate programs (Master's) and hold a valid license to practice music therapy from a country where the profession is legislated (e.g., United Kingdom) will be entitled to be registered without having to go through the KY.S.A.T.S Equivalency process.

5. An Association of Registered Music Therapists and a Disciplinary Committee will be formed within 6 months of the passing of the law.

In June 2021, a new president of the Committee on Health Affairs was elected, who suggested that CyMTA should withdraw the first legislative proposal and resubmit the new legislative proposal which was formulated in cooperation with the Legislative Department of the Ministry of Health. The president recommended resubmitting the new legislative proposal as more members of the Committee on Health Affairs would support the legislation since the new legislative proposal would be more complete than the first version, and was vetted by the Ministry of Health and other relevant state services.

In October 2021, the Committee on Health Affairs arranged another meeting regarding the new legislative proposal. All the relevant government bodies and representatives of CyPSA were invited to this session. In this meeting, the representatives of CyPSA raised some objections regarding the definition of music therapy and the way in which music therapists can practise their profession. They mentioned:

Not providing the possibility of autonomous performance of duties. Always upon referral by professionals in the field of mental health and within the framework of the operation of an Interprofessional Group which will also have the responsibility of the wider therapeutic planning and scientific supervision of any interventions. (House of Representatives, 2021).

This statement was considered by CyMTA as extremely wrong since it would hinder the exercise of music therapy as an autonomous health profession. The representatives from CyMTA clarified that music therapists always work within a framework of interprofessional therapeutic planning and that not all cases need a referral from a mental health professional since not all cases of music therapy involve mental illnesses. After this development, the deputy president of the Committee on Health Affairs suggested that a joint meeting between CyMTA and CyPSA should be arranged, so that the dispute could be resolved, and the Committee could proceed to the next stage.

Members of CyMTA proceeded to have a meeting with CyPSA and agreed to add the following provision to the proposed law: "Persons with mental health problems are received for music therapy clinical work only after a referral from a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist" (House of Representatives, 2021). Subsequently, a memorandum was sent by CyMTA to the Committee with the agreed amendments. Despite this agreement, CyPSA submitted a memorandum to the Committee on Health Affairs, reiterating their original position that music therapy cannot function as an autonomous health profession. This act of CyPSA to proceed with a different position while having an initial agreement with CyMTA was considered an irregularity and was ignored by the Committee.

In December 2021, the Committee on Health Affairs arranged a new meeting concerning music therapy legislation and invited all the relevant stakeholders to participate. In this meeting, the modified legislative proposal was read out and some objections were stated. Specifically, the representative of the M.L.S.I. argued that before regulating the music therapy profession in Cyprus, the Committee on Health Affairs should first examine how the music therapy profession is regulated in other European

countries through the database of the European Centre of Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD). Additionally, the representative from The Legal Services pointed out that a proportionality test should be conducted prior to the voting of the legislation, for the purposes of harmonization with the act of the European Community entitled "Directive" (EU 2018/958) and the Cyprus law [N.. 174(I)/2021] regarding 'proportionality test for new regulation of professions.' Also, the representative from the Ministry of Health requested that it should be written in the law that: "People with mental health problems are eligible for music therapy only after a referral from a psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist". However, the above request was in conflict with the referral procedures which the public schools for Special Education follow, so the representative of the Ministry of Education disagreed. At the end of this meeting, the president of the Committee on Health Affairs stated that, prior to the next meeting, the Ministry of Health must conduct the proportionality test and the research department of the Parliament must carry out an investigation concerning the legislations of music therapy professions in other European countries such as Serbia, the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. Also, the president requested that CyMTA, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education should have agreed on referral procedures for people with mental health problems (see Republic of Cyprus, 2022a).

The final meeting with the Committee on Health Affairs and all relevant stakeholders was held in March 2022. In that meeting, the research department of the parliament issued its findings about their investigation. According to their research, Music Therapy is regulated by law only in one country of the European Union, Austria. In Latvia and Lithuania, the profession of music therapist has been legally recognized as the profession of art therapist. In the United Kingdom, music therapy is regulated by the Supplementary Medical Professions Act of 1960, which was amended in 1997 to include creative therapists (art therapists, music therapists and drama therapists). Music therapy is one of the 15 Allied Health Professions (AHPs) in the United Kingdom's National Health System (NHS). Even though music therapy is not a regulated profession, it is taught in many public and private universities and practiced in national health systems across Europe. In some countries, such as Sweden, Estonia, and the Netherlands, music therapists have one or more associations and a code of ethics (see Republic of Cyprus, 2022b). Their findings had a very positive impact and supported the regulation of the profession of music therapy in Cyprus.

Additionally, the representative from the Ministry of Health, read out the report concerning the proportionality test and promoted the legislation concerning the music therapy profession mainly because the legislation will protect individuals who receive music therapy services (see Republic of Cyprus, 2022a). CyMTA also submitted a new memorandum regarding an adjustment in the legislative proposal. According to the memorandum, the Ministry of Health, CyMTA, and the Ministry of Education agreed that the following adjustment should be stated in the law:

People with mental health problems are eligible for music therapy only after a referral from a psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist. This clause is not applicable for the music therapy services which are provided in public schools for Special Education. (Cyprus Law, 2022, p. 859)

After that, the Committee on Health Affairs accepted the adjustments and reviewed all the articles of the legislative proposal. Finally, the president proposed a last meeting, this time between

the members of the Committee only, to check the final legislative proposal prior to the plenary session of the Parliament. The final legislative proposal was formulated by the legal department of the parliament and included all the adjustments which the relevant stakeholders had suggested and were approved.

In April 2022, the members of the Committee on Health Affairs discussed in depth about the whole legislation and concluded that the legislation should be put to a vote in the plenary of the parliament. In May 2022, the “law on the registration of music therapists and other related matters” was unanimously passed in Cyprus by the House of Representatives. Parliamentarians from all political parties supported the legislation and this had a decisive role in the establishment of the music therapy profession in Cyprus.

EPILOGUE

The establishment of regulations that define the practice of music therapy in Cyprus is a great achievement. Cyprus is the second country in the European Union to regulate music therapy as a health profession. The recognition of music therapy as a health profession opens new prospects for the inclusion of music therapy services in the National Health System (GESY), hospitals, mental health facilities, and elderly care homes. Subsequently, music therapy will no longer be considered useful only for children with learning disabilities, but as a therapeutic approach that can work positively for a variety of cases.

The existence of the law safeguards both the music therapist and the patient as it clearly defines the framework in which music therapy professionals acquire and maintain the competence required to provide high quality music therapy services. In other words, it ensures that the provided music therapy services are safe, effective, and patient-centered.

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APPENDIX: COPY OF MEMORANDUM [IN GREEK]⁷

ΣΥΝΔΕΣΜΟΣ ΜΟΥΣΙΚΟΘΕΡΑΠΕΙΑΣ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ
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Υπόμνημα Προς: Κοινοβουλευτική Επιτροπή Υγείας της Βουλής των Αντιπροσώπων

11 Μαρτίου, 2021

Θέμα: Ο περί Εγγραφής Μουσικοθεραπευτών Νόμος

Ο Σύνδεσμος Μουσικοθεραπείας Κύπρου, ως επίσημο οργανωμένο σύνολο καταρτισμένων μουσικοθεραπευτών στην Κύπρο (Αρ. μητρώου σωματείου 3658), ζητά όπως επανεξεταστεί από την Κοινοβουλευτική Επιτροπή Υγείας η πρόταση του Περί Εγγραφής Μουσικοθεραπευτών Νόμου, η οποία πλέον είναι κατεπείγον σημαντική.

Ως Σύνδεσμος, έχουμε διενεργήσει στο παρελθόν ακόμα δύο συναντήσεις με την Επιτροπή Υγείας της Βουλής, μια τον Οκτώβριο του 2010 και μια τον Ιούνιο του 2013, χωρίς όμως να έχουμε επιτύχει τα επιθυμητά αποτελέσματα. Εκ τότε, έχουν γίνει πολλές αλλαγές και ο αυξημένος αριθμός μουσικοθεραπευτών που εργάζεται στη χώρα μας επιβάλλει τη νομοθετική ρύθμιση του επαγγέλματος, χωρίς να αφήνει πολλά χρονικά περιθώρια αναβολής του.

Η θέσπιση νομοθεσίας του επαγγέλματος των μουσικοθεραπευτών είναι μείζονος σημασίας για τους εξής λόγους:

1. Το νομοθετικό πλαίσιο θα δρα προληπτικά σε πιθανά επικίνδυνα φαινόμενα που μπορούν εύκολα να προκύψουν λόγω της απουσίας του. Για παράδειγμα, παραπλάνηση, εκμετάλλευση και κερδοσκοπία σε βάρος των ασθενών από **μη-Μουσικοθεραπευτές**. Ο Σύνδεσμος έχει δεχτεί πάρα πολλές καταγγελίες σχετικά με άτομα που παρουσιάζουν τους εαυτούς τους ως μουσικοθεραπευτές ενώ δεν είναι και τα οποία εργάζονται σε Ιδρύματα ή άλλες δομές που σχετίζονται με ευάλωτες ομάδες. Δυστυχώς, λόγω της έλλειψης νομοθετικής κατοχύρωσης, ο Σύνδεσμος δεν μπορεί να παρέμβει, έτσι τα άτομα αυτά δρουν ανενόχλητα σε βάρος ευάλωτων ομάδων.
2. Θα διασφαλίζει τη σωστότερη δυνατόν άσκηση του επαγγέλματος του μουσικοθεραπευτή (π.χ. κριτήρια για εγγραφή στο Μητρώο, συνεχιζόμενη επαγγελματική ανάπτυξη) και ως εκ τούτου την ποιοτικότερη δυνατόν παροχή θεραπείας στον ευάλωτο πληθυσμό που καλείται ο μουσικοθεραπευτής να εξυπηρετήσει.
3. Το νομοθετικό πλαίσιο θα είναι το επίσημο σημείο αναφοράς για αμερόληπτη και ακριβή απεικόνιση της φύσης του επαγγέλματος και του επαγγελματία, για εξάλειψη σύγχυσης και αποπροσανατολισμού.

⁷ The current copy is published with the permission of CyMTA.



4. Θα καταστεί επίσημο σημείο εκκίνησης για μια σωστή πορεία και ανέλιξη του επαγγέλματος, όπως και συμπερίληψής του στο ΓΕΣΥ, πράγμα που έχει ήδη γίνει για συναφή επαγγέλματα υγείας.
5. Οι μουσικοθεραπευτές χρήζουν ίσης μεταχείρισης με τους υπόλοιπους επαγγελματίες υγείας αναφορικά με τη διασφάλιση των επαγγελματικών τους καθηκόντων, όπως και των εργασιακών τους δικαιωμάτων.
6. Τέλος, πρέπει να σημειωθεί ότι το επάγγελμα της μουσικοθεραπείας ήδη ασκείται στην Κύπρο και ο ρυθμός ζήτησης και παροχής του αυξάνεται συνεχώς τα τελευταία χρόνια. Οι μουσικοθεραπευτές εργοδοτούνται τόσο από το Υπουργείο Υγείας, στις Υπηρεσίες Ψυχικής Υγείας (με αγορά υπηρεσιών), όσο και από το Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Πολιτισμού, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας στα Ειδικά Σχολεία. Η χρησιμότητα της μουσικοθεραπείας αποδεικνύεται από την αύξηση των μουσικοθεραπευτών στα Ειδικά Σχολεία. Από το 2017, το Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Πολιτισμού, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας διόρισε ακόμα δέκα μουσικοθεραπευτές, που σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία διορισμών 2019-2020, το ποσοστό των έκτακτων έφτασε το 63,15%, το πιο ψηλό ποσοστό σε σύγκριση με τις υπόλοιπες ειδικότητες. Αυτό αδιαμφισβήτητα οφείλεται, σε ένα μεγάλο βαθμό, στην αποδοχή της συμβολής και αποτελεσματικότητας που έχει επιδείξει ο κλάδος. Έτσι, η θέσπιση νομοθεσίας γίνεται τάχιστα πιο αναγκαία για όλους τους πιο πάνω λόγους.

Αξίζει να σημειωθεί πως ο Σύνδεσμος έχει μελετήσει εκτενέστερα το θέμα των προσόντων για εγγραφή στο μητρώο (άρθρο 8 στην πρόταση), μετά από εκδήλωση διαφόρων απόψεων και προβληματισμών, κατά τη διάρκεια των προηγούμενων συνεδριών του 2010 και 2013. Οι προβληματισμοί επικεντρώνονταν κυρίως στο γεγονός ότι προτείνεται αναγνώριση Μεταπτυχιακού-Μαστερ στη Μουσικοθεραπεία, ως επαρκές προσόν για εγγραφή στο μητρώο. Ο Σύνδεσμος, από τότε έχει κάνει αρκετές ενέργειες ώστε να διασφαλίσει πως η κατάρτιση των μουσικοθεραπευτών με μάστερ από αναγνωρισμένα πανεπιστήμια του εξωτερικού είναι επαρκές προσόν:

1. Μετά από μια σειρά βημάτων του Συνδέσμου με εκπροσώπους του Υπουργείου Παιδείας, Πολιτισμού, Αθλητισμού και Νεολαίας και του ΚΥΣΑΤΣ, καταφέραμε να γίνεται συνεκτίμηση του μεταπτυχιακού τίτλου επιπέδου Master στη Μουσικοθεραπεία και του πρώτου πτυχίου των υποψηφίων και να δίνεται τίτλος ισότιμος και αντίστοιχος προς Πτυχίο πανεπιστημιακού επιπέδου στον κλάδο/ειδίκευση της Μουσικοθεραπείας.
2. Επίσης, πρέπει να τονίσουμε πως στις πλείστες περιπτώσεις όπου οι υποψήφιοι ήταν κάτοχοι μεταπτυχιακού στη Μουσικοθεραπεία, κατά τη συνεκτίμηση δεν υπολείπονταν μαθήματα σε σχέση με το πρότυπο πρόγραμμα σπουδών Μουσικοθεραπείας, όπως αυτό καθορίζεται από το ΚΥΣΑΤΣ.



3. Το ΚΥΣΑΤΣ μετά από συναντήσεις που κάναμε με την επιτροπή του, διόρισε, ως ανεξάρτητους κριτές, δυο ακαδημαϊκούς, εγνωσμένου κύρους, οι οποίοι είναι καθηγητές σε αναγνωρισμένα πανεπιστήμια του εξωτερικού, στον κλάδο της Μουσικοθεραπείας.

Επιπροσθέτως, θα πρέπει να τονίσουμε πως τα αναγνωρισμένα προγράμματα μουσικοθεραπείας, στις περισσότερες ευρωπαϊκές χώρες και ιδιαίτερα του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου (από πού οι περισσότεροι Κύπριοι Μουσικοθεραπευτές είναι απόφοιτοι), είναι σε **Μεταπτυχιακό-Μάστερ** επίπεδο. Αυτά τα μεταπτυχιακά είναι σχεδιασμένα ώστε να προετοιμάσουν τον μουσικοθεραπευτή να μπορεί να ανταπεξέλθει σε ένα απαιτητικό τομέα, όπως είναι ο ευρύτερος τομέας της υγείας και να προσφέρει την καλύτερη ποιότητα υπηρεσιών. Περιλαμβάνουν κλινική εμπειρία και συνεχή εποπτεία.

Το Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο, είναι μία από τις τρεις Ευρωπαϊκές χώρες, μαζί με την Αυστρία και τη Λετονία, όπου το επάγγελμα του μουσικοθεραπευτή διέπεται από ανάλογη νομοθεσία από το 1996. Όσον αφορά στις σπουδές και στην διαδικασία αναγνώρισης της μουσικοθεραπείας στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο, έχει γίνει μια εκτενής αξιολόγηση των Μουσικοθεραπευτών που έπρεπε για αρκετό καιρό, γι' αυτόν τον λόγο, να συνεργαστούν με το Υπουργείο Υγείας (Department of Health-DoH). Αφού συλλέχθηκαν αρκετά στοιχεία για την επίδραση και αποτελεσματικότητα της συνεισφοράς της μουσικοθεραπείας ως επάγγελμα υγείας, τότε οι μουσικοθεραπευτές μπορούσαν να υποβάλουν αίτηση στο τότε Συμβούλιο Επαγγελματιών Υγείας (Health Professions Council-HPC, το οποίο ενεργεί ως Συμβούλιο Εγγραφής 20 περίπου Επαγγελματιών Υγείας). Εφόσον η αίτηση γινόταν αποδεκτή, τότε θα μπορούσε να περάσει προς κοινοβουλευτική ψήφιση και οι μουσικοθεραπευτές σε επαγγελματική κατοχύρωση (από τα πρακτικά της Γενικής Συνέλευσης της Ευρωπαϊκής Συνομοσπονδίας Μουσικοθεραπείας (EMTC) στο Ταλλίν τον Ιούνιο του 2012 – αναφορά της Τέσσα Ουότσον, εκπροσώπου Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου στο θέμα αναγνώριση/εγγραφή).

Επιπλέον, είναι ευρέως αποδεκτό πως το εκπαιδευτικό και το επαγγελματικό επίπεδο στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο είναι από τα πλέον αξιόπιστα στην Ευρώπη. Αναφερόμαστε στο παράδειγμα του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου γιατί οφείλουμε να λάβουμε σοβαρά υπόψη τις τάσεις χωρών όπου το επάγγελμα είναι ήδη εδραιωμένο και κατοχυρωμένο, ιδιαίτερα λόγω του ότι δεν υπάρχει ακόμη αναγνωρισμένο πανεπιστημιακό πρόγραμμα στον τομέα της μουσικοθεραπείας στην Κύπρο, αλλά ούτε και στην Ελλάδα, για να υπάρξει έγκυρο μέτρο σύγκρισης.

Εν κατακλείδι και λαμβάνοντας υπόψη όλα τα παραπάνω, πιστεύουμε ότι είναι σημαντικό να υπάρξει, σε αυτό το εξελικτικό στάδιο, ανάλογη νομοθεσία που να ρυθμίζει το επάγγελμα όπως και Συμβούλιο Εγγραφής που θα πιστοποιεί την κατάρτιση του μουσικοθεραπευτή και θα κατευθύνει προς τακτική συνεχιζόμενη επαγγελματική ανάπτυξη, για την πιο ποιοτική παροχή θεραπειών. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο θα προστατεύεται στο μέγιστο, οποιοδήποτε άτομο παραπέμπεται, χρειάζεται, επιζητεί και λαμβάνει τις υπηρεσίες μουσικοθεραπείας, όπως και θα διασφαλίζεται και το δικαίωμα που έχουν οι μουσικοθεραπευτές να είναι αναγνωρισμένο και



κατοχυρωμένο επάγγελμα υγείας, ακολουθώντας τα πρότυπα εργασίας που επικρατούν στις υπόλοιπες Ευρωπαϊκές και ανεπτυγμένες χώρες.

Εκ Μέρους του Συνδέσμου Μουσικοθεραπείας Κύπρου

Αντωνία Πλυσή
(Πρόεδρος)

Ελληνική περίληψη | Greek abstract

Η πορεία της νομοθετικής ρύθμισης του επαγγέλματος της μουσικοθεραπείας στην Κύπρο

Αντωνία Πλυσή | Παναγιώτα Καπνίση

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Στις 5 Μαΐου 2022, ψηφίστηκε ομόφωνα από τη Βουλή των Αντιπροσώπων στην Κύπρο, ο νόμος που προβλέπει για την εγγραφή μουσικοθεραπευτών και για άλλα συναφή θέματα [N.68(1)2022]. Η παρούσα αναφορά περιγράφει αναλυτικά τη διαδικασία που ακολουθήθηκε από τον Σύνδεσμο Μουσικοθεραπείας Κύπρου (ΣΥ.ΜΟΥ.Κ.) προκειμένου να επιτευχθεί η νομοθετική ρύθμιση του μουσικοθεραπευτικού επαγγέλματος. Πριν αναλύσουμε σε βάθος τη διαδικασία, παρουσιάζουμε μια σύντομη εισαγωγή στην ιστορία της Κύπρου, για να διευκρινίσουμε την ιδιαίτερη πολιτική συνθήκη που επικρατεί στη χώρα. Έπειτα, κάνουμε μια ιστορική αναδρομή στην εξέλιξη της μουσικοθεραπείας και του μουσικοθεραπευτικού επαγγέλματος στην Κύπρο και εν κατακλείδι περιγράφουμε το κυπριακό συνταγματικό πλαίσιο, καθώς η νομοθετική κατοχύρωση του μουσικοθεραπευτικού επαγγέλματος στην Κύπρο επιτεύχθηκε κυρίως μέσω συνταγματικών διαδικασιών.

ΛΕΞΕΙΣ ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ

Κύπρος, νόμος μουσικοθεραπείας, νομοθετική κατοχύρωση, επάγγελμα υγείας, νομοθετική ρύθμιση