



## SERBIA

### Country report on professional recognition of music therapy

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#### HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The development of music therapy in Serbia can be followed through several phases:

The *introductory phase* (1945-2001) in which we made a distinction between the period of isolated individuals and the attempt of gathering. The introductory phase started with physicians who tried to apply music within certain techniques and methods of treatment. The first physician who was associated with music therapy was Petar Stanković who published the book *'Božanstvena Medicina'* in 1945 and in it he showed his technique for music treatment which he applied in several psychiatric hospitals in the country and abroad. He also presented at a series of international expert meetings.

The cooperation of physicians who engaged with music therapy in the former Yugoslavia resulted in the first expert meeting in 1970. Pioneers in music therapy in the country and abroad met at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Congress of Social Psychiatry in Zagreb which was organised by Vladimir Hudolin and chief physician Darko Bajtenfeld.

After the initial momentum of isolated individuals (of whose work there is no written trace) we came upon a standstill in the development of music therapy until 1994 when Ranka Radulović joined the Institute for Psychiatry of the Clinical Centre of Serbia and started an initiative to introduce music therapy to everyday psychiatric practice. Outcomes of this included the original techniques of analytical music listening – guided fantasies method (Radulovic 1996) and the integrative music therapy (Radulovic 2001) as documented in her Master's and PhD theses at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Belgrade, and presented in Serbia and abroad.

The *early phase* (2001-2007) entailed the realisation of a national association for the establishment of music therapy, as well as the creation of a training programme,

under the auspices of the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC).

The Association of Music Therapists of Yugoslavia (YAMT) was established at the initiative of Ranka Radulović, MD on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2001 with the support of close associates and expert authorities in the fields of psychiatry, psychotherapy, medicine, music, art, special education and psychology. At that time we did not have qualified music therapists. Under the YAMT we adopted the association statute, an ethical code, rules on a four-year music therapy programme, which in addition to the theoretical programme and the personal psychotherapy of candidates, included practical teaching and supervision in the Institute of Psychiatry of the Clinical Centre of Serbia and Special Hospital for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Neurology. On the basis of this, the process of certification and the education of music therapists started in the country in 2002.

The most significant moment in this period happened in 2004 with the acceptance of the association to the EMTC. The support that we received at that time from the EMTC board and the late Tony Wigram was of priceless importance in the process of acquiring the legitimacy of YAMT.

YAMT had to adjust to social-political circumstances, and in accordance with the forming of the group of qualified music therapists in 2007, the association changed its name to the Association of Music Therapists of Serbia (AMTS).

The *development phase* (2008 onwards) started with the formation of 'Hatorum'; the first specialised centre for education and counselling in music therapy in the country which brought forth the renewed revision of the AMTS documents. This defined the position of Hatorum as an educational base and AMTS, which issues national certificates in music therapy, represents the framework for all music therapists as well as the partner organisation EMTC. It was agreed that Hatorum should act in coordination and in closest cooperation with the AMTS.

The focus of the work of Hatorum is the education of music therapists as an associated medical profession. In addition, the specialised programmes in thanatology, victimology and bereavement counselling will enable the implementation of music therapy in social care settings, schools, preschools and counselling settings. Hatorum has developed the concept of bereavement music therapy as a new type of preventive intervention. The AMTS has produced a rulebook regarding the work of professional music therapists which defines the requirements for work and the process of recertification of educated music therapists.

The AMTS has also adopted a series of normative documents which regulate the work of other bodies of the association in which educated music therapists are formally recognised. In addition, a national register of professional music therapists has been produced.

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## IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

Music therapy has been introduced as a healthcare service in the field of classical medicine in accordance with the rulebook on nomenclature of medical services on secondary and tertiary level of healthcare, Official Gazette of RS no. 58/13.

Since 2008 music therapy has been considered a medical service in the field of classical medicine by the state healthcare fund.

### Strategic plans in the process of recognition

In the next phase of the process of legalisation of music therapy as a profession, the AMTS will focus on a more intensive cooperation with ministries in charge and will be actively lobbying for music therapists to be included in the national classification of the nomenclature of professions as an associated medical profession. The main argument for that is the fact that music therapy as a service is recognised and paid by the state health insurance fund, so there is therefore the possibility for malpractice by health workers who are not fully qualified.

In order to protect music therapists and the general population from untested sound derivatives, the AMTS has suggested an amendment to the Law on Medicinal Products and Medical Devices, in Article 172. Written support was received by Hatorum in 2010 from the Ministry of Labour and Social Care of the Republic of Serbia with regard to the implementation of music therapy in the institutions for social care. Accordingly, an amendment will be required in the rulebook on minimal standards for provision of counselling therapy services in social care (which was published in the Official Gazette of RS no. 24/2011) and the rulebook on expert work in social care (Official Gazette of RS 1/2012).

In connection with the application of music therapy in schools and preschools, an amendment is needed for the rulebook on additional health and social support for children and pupils (Official Gazette RS, no. 63/10).

The main problem is the failure to differentiate music therapy from music pedagogy, which is manifested in the current rulebook on curriculum in the programme of primary education for mildly mentally challenged pupils (Official Gazette of RS – Educational Gazette, number 19/93) which represents a challenge for urgent correction.

We will try to establish a cooperation with the state and/or private universities in order to maintain a Master's programme and full implementation of the European Music Therapy Register (EMTR) standards.

## CONCLUSION

Bearing in mind the current level of development of music therapy in the country, we can say that a lot has been done regarding this issue in the previous 13 years since the establishing of the AMTS and we are now witnessing

the beginnings of the adoption of legal regulations by the state. However, the development of music therapy in the country is still in its infancy.

Future priorities include an increase in music therapy research and publications, further marketing activities and intensive lobbying. Likewise, it is necessary to establish collaboration with different universities and private training centres both in Serbia and abroad. The continuous development of the AMTS and close cooperation with the fields of health and social care, education, culture and art will hopefully result in the adoption of legal regulations and procedures in music therapy.

## SELECTED LINKS

- ❑ Association of Music Therapists of Serbia (AMTS): [www.muzikoterapija.rs](http://www.muzikoterapija.rs)
- ❑ EMTC country information: <http://emtc-eu.com/country-reports/serbia/>
- ❑ Hatorum: [www.hatorum.com](http://www.hatorum.com)

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- Radulović, R., & Pejović, M. (1997). *Muzika i depresija, /Music and depression/ Savremena administracija*. Beograd: Savremena administracija.