



SPAIN

Country report on professional recognition of music therapy

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HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Historical perspectives about the therapeutic use of music in Spain have been well-documented and the first references about the therapeutic uses of music date from the 18th century. However, music therapy as a profession was introduced in the 1960s by Serafina Poch.

Since then, most initiatives related to music therapy have been developed in public or private institutions (Poch 2013; Sabbatella 2004). Although the development and presence of music therapy in educational and medical fields have advanced considerably, Spain still faces the future with challenges such as the official recognition of the field by the relevant authorities (Mercadal-Brotons & Sabbatella 2014).

Before the first university training programme in music therapy which started in the early 1990s, some training programmes were offered in private institutes and some individual courses existed in universities and other institutions. From 2001, several universities throughout Spain offer music therapy training at postgraduate level (Mateos-Hernández 2011; Poch 2013; Sabbatella & Brotons 2014).

At the professional level, following the typical steps of all developing professions, there has been a proliferation of music therapy associations over the years. Currently there are a total of 48 music therapy associations in Spain, and one newly-formed Music Therapy Federation

(Federación Española de Asociaciones de Musicoterapia) which was established in 2014. Ten music therapy associations are members of the European Music Therapy Confederation (EMTC).

The large number of associations does not promote a unified vision of the discipline in professional and academic fields, and is not always taken seriously by the relevant authorities. Inside this dispersion, the AEMP (Asociación Española de Musicoterapeutas Profesionales – Spanish Association of Professional Music Therapists) was approved in September of 2007 by the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales). The main objective is the regulation of the profession of music therapy in Spain (Mateos-Hernández & Fonseca 2008). The AEMP is the only Music Therapy Trade Union Association of Spain, and this serves to promote its professional recognition.

The AEMP is a member of the EMTC and the WFMT. Several documents and actions have been developed by the AEMP to achieve its goals. The AEMP is fully coordinated with several Spanish universities and associations of music therapy. After seven years of intense work, the AEMP is becoming a reference point for several professionals dedicated to music therapy in Spain, and has contributed to the success of several objectives proposed by Mercadal-Brotons and Mateos-Hernández (2005) and by Sabbatella (2008, 2011a).

RECOGNITION AND APPROVAL

The situation described above shows that, on a professional level, many music therapists still tussle with the internal problem of individualism against what is best for the group. On the other hand, a group of professional music therapists are promoting the need for organisation as a professional group in order to achieve legal and institutional recognition and therefore provide the best support for all music therapists in Spain. In so doing they may become more fully integrated within the educational, community and health environments.

IMPORTANT STEPS IN THE RECOGNITION PROCESS

Although music therapy is not yet a recognised profession in Spain, several important steps have been taken in order to achieve this goal. In the last five years there have been several attempts from music therapy associations and training programmes to discuss and establish common guidelines and minimum standards for the training and practice of music therapy (Sabbatella 2011a, 2011b). Different documents have been written and approved by the Spanish music therapy association members of the EMTC:

- 1) 'Standards for Being a Music Therapist in Spain' (2007).

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- 2) 'Guidelines for the Development of University Postgraduate Music Therapy Training Programs' (2008) approved by the AEMP and signed by seven university music therapy Master's programmes.
- 3) 'Spanish Music Therapy Register' (*Registro de Musicoterapeutas Acreditados en España - REMTA*), an adaptation of the European Music Therapy Register (EMTR) to national guidelines (2009). At the present time (2014), there are 24 registered music therapists in Spain according to the REMTA.
- 4) 'Code of Ethics for Professional Music Therapists in Spain' which is an adaptation of the EMTC code of ethics to national guidelines (2014).
- 5) 'Spanish Music Therapy Research Index' (*Índice Español de Investigaciones y Publicaciones en Musicoterapia 2014*) approved by the AEMP.

Music therapy in context in Spain

Different studies about the professional status of music therapy in Spain show that music therapists work with a wide variety of populations, from children to adults in education, community and health areas. Most of them work on a part-time basis and through particular projects rather than holding full-time jobs (Sabbatella & Brotons 2012). Results of the study conducted by Poch in 2013, show that 2686 people have trained as music therapists in Spain. Moreover, research and publications are progressively increasing in the country. In a current descriptive study, 479 music therapy publications with Spanish participation were identified, mainly articles and papers (Del Moral, Mercadal-Brotons & Sánchez-Prada 2014).

SELECTED LINKS

- ❑ EMTC country information:
<http://emtc-eu.com/country-reports/spain/>
- ❑ Spanish Association of Professional Music Therapists (AEMP, Asociación Española de Musicoterapeutas Profesionales):
<http://musicoterapeutas.es/>
- ❑ Spanish Federation of Music Therapy Associations (FEAMT, Federación Española de Asociaciones de Musicoterapia):
<http://feamt.es/>

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