



HIPEN welcomes FEAPDA



Jeign Craig and Paul Simpson were at a meeting of HIPEN – the European network for professionals who work with hearing-impaired people

Jeign writes: We were delighted to welcome Paul Simpson to our three-day HIPEN General Meeting which was held at the school for the deaf in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

This school has won European status.

HIPEN has two General Meetings each year and member organisations across Europe take turns to be host. The autumn meeting focuses on European projects – topics, participants and applications. We are proud of many completed and ongoing projects which are funded by Europe. The projects include professional exchanges, student exchanges, sharing our expertise, learning from each other and devising toolkits, guides and assessments to be used by professionals in their work. Project reports and news can be seen on our website: www.hipen.eu

This valuable network has been in existence for eight years and has members across Europe: east and west and including Scandinavia. Our spring meeting concentrates on agreed topics and hosting centres invite local experts and arrange educational and clinical visits, lectures and workshops.

Our members have their own area on the website which is a useful discussion forum for all aspects of education and training.



Our members were interested in Paul's presentation about FEAPDA and BATOD. It was interesting to see that many of the countries belonging to FEAPDA which still have professional associations of Teachers of the Deaf are not those who belong to HIPEN. The members of HIPEN are mainly organisations – schools, colleges and services for deaf people. We are therefore complimentary to each other and possible joint congresses or meetings could be valuable in the future. We hope this new partnership will continue and

representatives from HIPEN hope to attend future FEADPA meetings.

Paul writes: It was a very interesting visit. Never having been to Romania before I was fascinated to do so especially as so many BATOD colleagues over the years have visited to support deaf children in that country. I even undertook a church crawl on one free afternoon! Living dangerously!

There are indeed differences and similarities between HIPEN and FEAPDA, the main difference being the geographical reach. France used be a strong member of





FEAPDA and played a part in its founding. However, France is no longer a member but is well represented in HIPEN through several institutions.

Also HIPEN predominantly concentrates on institutions for deaf children and young people rather than associations – in the case of FEAPDA the membership used to be based on such institutions within a specific country but as fewer and fewer deaf children attend such institutions there has been an effect on FEAPDA's membership and this is currently under review.

The meeting started with administrative matters including finances, publicity, notes from the previous meeting and then moved on to what was called a "Good News spot" which I think would be an excellent innovation for the FEAPDA council. It speaks for itself!

A new member made a presentation to the whole meeting explaining why it should be admitted. Admission was warmly agreed. It was another French organisation, from Marseille, working in the field of sensory impairment supporting a range of people in a range of activities. Its website is www.irsam.fr

It was good to hear of the projects being undertaken throughout the network of HIPEN institutions and I will encourage FEAPDA members to frequent the HIPEN website to learn more about them and perhaps even make contributions. Some HIPEN members expressed an interest in considering joining FEAPDA and contact details were exchanged. As is the case with FEAPDA, financial constraint is an ever-present concern. Although the coordinator is paid a small amount, each institution

must pay its own expenses and this is difficult for many of them.

I expressed a hope that some might attend the FEAPDA congress next September in Luxembourg and further links could be forged then. Perhaps a HIPEN 'stall' could be included?

In my presentation I talked about one very apposite aspect of FEAPDA's work – the Leonardo project looking at the qualifications of Teachers of the Deaf across Europe. Although the project finished a few years ago the interest in continuing it remains alive and we are hoping to use the current iCARE project (described in the May 2014 Magazine) as a launch pad to further activity. Online training is a real possibility and might be something which could emerge from any extended Leonardo-type project and could support those countries, including some of the HIPEN members, to develop training for Teachers of the Deaf where it does not currently exist. At the same time the continuing encouragement of mutual exchanges and contacts can only be beneficial.

We look forward to increasing collaboration and cooperation between HIPEN and FEAPDA.

Jeign Craig is HIPEN Vice-President representing the UK (formerly as Head of College, Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education); she is now retired but still strongly involved in deaf education in Europe and a Trustee of the Cued Speech Association UK. Paul Simpson is the President of FEAPDA and the National Executive Officer of BATOD.