

Campaign to strengthen cultural diversity in Europe, based on the example of the ELIANT campaign

A civil society initiative project



At the very start of the second civil society conference on 12/13 May 2007 in Vienna, the view of many was summarised in a single phrase: Our current way of life has no future! Many open questions and acute problems exist in relation to social community, environmental issues and politics. Where today can we find alternatives or potential solutions for tasks that have now become global? What can we do to preserve diversity and enhance quality of life? How can we reconcile the right to self-determination with tendencies to uniformity appearing in many areas of life?

One example of a new tool for participating in a democratic Europe was given by Thomas Göing, who introduced the ELIANT campaign in a brief presentation and workshop.

This is an EU-wide petition which aims to address people who value initiatives of applied anthroposophy, such as:

- **Biodynamic foods produced under the DEMETER brand**
- **Anthroposophic medicines used in clinics and GP practices**
- **Special needs education and social therapy services**
- **Waldorf education and infant-care services**

The legal bases for developing these cultural initiatives in Europe are not yet secure. On the contrary, such activities are increasingly obstructed by guidelines and regulations. For this reason anthroposophical umbrella organisations have now amalgamated to form the *European Alliance of Initiatives for Applied Anthroposophy / ELIANT*. They are working together, on behalf of the citizens of Europe, to put in place legal safeguards for anthroposophical institutions and services, and to collaborate with other civil society domains that share similar goals.

Two examples by way of illustration

EU legislation has led to synthetic vitamin supplementation of biodynamic baby foods

In 1996 the EU passed a guideline regulating cereal first foods for babies and infants.¹ This determines the requirements for food constituents used during the weaning period of infants. The guideline prescribes Vitamin B1 contents of at least 25 µg/100 kJ in cereal mash or baby bottles. This minimum level is set so high that it cannot even be achieved in a full-grain product

¹ Guideline 96/5/EG of 16 February 1996 on cereal and other first foods for babies and infants. Official Journal L 49 on 28.2.1996

diluted with milk. In contrast to this, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the FAO believe that substantially lower levels are wholly sufficient. In the Codex Alimentarius they recommend minimum Vitamin B1 contents of only 12,5 µg/100 kJ.² As opposed to the excessively high minimum level in the EU guideline, the Vitamin B1 level in the Codex Alimentarius can be achieved without the addition of synthetic vitamins to cereal first foods.

This excessive Vitamin B1 content stipulated by the EU first-foods guideline means that producers of baby and infant foods manufactured under the biodynamic guidelines of the Demeter cultivators association, are forced to add vitamins to their products. This “compulsory vitamin supplementation” conflicts with the aims and approach inherent in ecologically produced and processed products. The consumers of organic and biodynamic products expect these to be produced naturally and processed in an eco-friendly way. Above all, they should not contain additives that do not naturally belong to them.

There is as yet no legislation relating specifically to anthroposophic medicines, and this means their availability is at risk!

Anthroposophic medicines produced in accordance with the guideline on homeopathy and in line with herbal medicine procedures are not at risk as far as availability and trading permits are concerned. However this does not cover medicines produced according to specifically anthroposophic manufacturing methods, such as potentised medicines below a 4x potency (D4), nor the varied range of ampoules for subcutaneous injection. There is still no statutory regulation governing these, despite the fact that such medicines have been used in Germany and elsewhere for over eighty years, and are highly valued by many patients. For the past 20 years, indeed, efforts have been made to secure EU-wide permits for them. Numerous patients would be adversely affected if they were withdrawn from circulation.

Anthroposophically-inspired art therapy and other areas such as Steiner Waldorf schools and special needs education for children and adults with learning difficulties need legal framework conditions that enable them to survive and develop.

Draft legislation is needed in these areas

It is clear from the above that legal framework conditions must be created if anthroposophical cultural initiatives are to continue to make their valuable contribution to a relationship with others and the natural environment that is based on integrity and respect.

For all these reasons ELIANT has launched an EU-wide petition campaign. To draw the attention of European committees to the actual scope, activity and benefit of institutions and products based on anthroposophy, the ELIANT Charter’s initiators are asking everyone who uses such services/products, and all who are interested in real quality of life to sign the appeal at www.eliant.eu and to draw others’ attention to this campaign, and encourage them to sign too.

One million signatures are possible and will help give the ELIANT Alliance greater support and influence in its political actions. The number of one million is drawn from the European Constitution (article 1-47, clause 4). While this has not yet entered into force, it already carries

² FAO/WHO: Codex Alimentarius Commission, 26th Session, Bonn, Germany, 1-5 November 2004 (ALINORM 05/28/26)

political weight in assessing whether a concern or submission to an EU authority or Parliament has sufficient “critical mass” behind it.

Promoting a Europe that keeps its promises

The European motto runs: “United in diversity”.

Current and planned restrictions implemented by European legislation are clearly in opposition to this fundamental right. It is in all our interests to work to persuade EU authorities that decisions and actions taken in ALL areas of life should accord with the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights. Every vote counts.

Information in brief:

The Alliance Charter and online voting at: www.eliant.eu

If you would like to support the campaign, please contact:

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The European Alliance of Initiatives for Applied Anthroposophy (ELIANT) is an amalgamation of 10 associations and institutions working at European level (see also the Charter of 29.9.2006 at www.eliant.eu).