AIMS For a better birth...

ENCA 2017

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25th annual meeting of the European Network of Childbirth Associations

Twenty-two representatives from eleven European countries met for the 25th annual meeting of the European Network of Childbirth Associations in Cascais, Portugal. The first and third days focused on ENCA's activities and organisation.

To aid better communication within the group a Facebook page and a google list, for members to exchange ideas and information, has been created. The ENCA page on the web is being updated. www.enca.info

It was clear from the meeting that all the countries suffer from over-medicalised care to a lesser or greater degree. As in the UK, many birth centres have been closed down. In Germany, a woman can choose her antenatal care from a doctor or midwife, but some doctors were requiring women to sign a form which would ensure that they could only receive care from that particular doctor, protests to the government successfully outlawed that practice. Many countries highlighted the difficulties in obtaining and promoting midwifery care, the lack of freestanding midwifery units, and the inadequacy of postnatal care appeared to be universal.

14–21 May 2018 has been designated the International Week for Respecting Childbirth and it was decided that the ENCA slogan for this will be '*Less interference. More Care*'. Each country is encouraged to organise events and demonstrations around this and promotional material will be publically available on the ENCA website.

The Portuguese group, Associação Gravidez e Parto, www.associacaogravidezeparto.pt organised a very successful conference on the second day and invited Professor Cecily Begley to present the findings of the OptiBIRTH study and the AIMS Chair, Beverley Beech, presented a paper on the history of birth culture in the UK. A copy is available on request from chair@aims.org.uk.

The next ENCA meeting will be held on the 27- 29th April 2018 in Sanski Most, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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