



Euforia



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KEY WOMEN EDUCATORS
DELTA KAPPA GAMMA™
European Forum



The DKG Europe Newsletter. Edition 67, November 2026

Highlights: Introduction of the new Europe Regional Director and the European Forum Committee 2026-2028,

The Ignite, The conference in Norway and many more interesting articles. Enjoy!



Dear friends,

Here is EUFORIA, edition 67, the Autumn edition of 2026. This is the first issue without the editing of Kristín Guðbjörg Snæland from Iceland. For many years she did such an outstanding job. Thank you so much, Kristin.

It is hard to fill your shoes.

In this issue you can read about DKG's work in many countries: an introduction of our new Europe Regional Director and the new European Forum Committee. We gain insight into what influences the choices made regarding kindergarten teachers' work with Sámi content in kindergartens in Agder, Norway; read about the Ignite and the Winnovation project in Finland; The Gift of DKG: Growth, Connection and Collaboration in Estonia;



Together we can do it! – Challenge Project from Germany; an article on “Stolpersteine” in Rastede from Germany; An article of a chapter that adopted a local refugee center for unaccompanied minor girls from the Netherlands; An article about the convention in Aurora, Colorado from Great Britain; A review on the last year from Iceland: An article with interesting news from Sweden and a flyer to welcome you all to the conference in Kristiansand Norway from 11-13 June 2027. Hopefully you all enjoy this edition of EUFORIA.

Many thanks to Muriel Marsh and Evelyn Goodsell for proofreading the articles; they have been a great help. Thanks to all the members that contributed exciting articles for this issue. Without your contributions there is no EUFORIA. So if you have something interesting to share with the members, please send your contribution to your State President, member of the European Forum or me.

Carola van Zanen-van Rijn, Delta Chapter the Netherlands.

Shining A Spotlight On...

The new Europe Regional Director and

the members of the European Forum 2026-2028



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Barbara Carlsen



Norway

This summer I was honoured to be elected as Europe Regional Director for the next two years. It is already clear that it is going to be a busy and exciting time. There is a lot to learn to be able to serve you as well as possible in this position, but I look forward to being a voice for Europe in the organisation.

For those who don't know me, I am British by birth and then, having met a tall, blonde Viking. I moved to Norway after completing my university and teacher training qualifications in Newcastle, UK in the 1970's.

During my professional life I have taught in Norwegian schools and then at the International School of Oslo which caters for students from age 3 – 19 years. In my last 12 years at OIS I was head of the school. Latterly I have worked at an Adult Education Centre, working partly in administration as well as teaching Norwegian language and social studies to all categories of immigrants.

Now I am officially retired, but still occasionally enjoy being a substitute teacher and supervising exams. I have been a member of DKG since 2010 after the Delta chapter came for a visit to my school. Since joining DKG I have enjoyed filling a variety of roles including secretary to the State board, chapter president and State President. Here's hoping this will stand me in good stead for my new role.

I look forward to getting to know more members in each of our 8 countries and to finding out together what lies ahead for DKG.



Barbara Carlsen, Europe Regional Director 2026-2028



Vilborg Ása Bjarnadóttir



Iceland

Dear European DKG members.

My name is Vilborg Ása Bjarnadóttir and I am an EFC member from Iceland. I have been a member of the DKG Iota chapter (Westfjords) in Iceland since 2018. I have been the chair of the Iota chapter, and I am on the state board in Iceland as the first vice president. I am now serving my second term on the state board. I have already been a member of the European Forum Committee for the past two years, which has given me an opportunity to work with members of a great team. I am really looking forward to working with them for the next two years.

It is a privilege to get to know women all over the world who work in the same field as me. You gain more open-mindedness and more knowledge. It is a great honor for me to take on the chair of the European Forum Committee the next two years and hope that I can do it as well as the ones before me.

I have been a principal in a small elementary school for the past three years. Before that I had been teaching for 22 years. I really enjoy teaching and I miss it a lot. But I get to teach students from time to time.



In my job I am always learning something new and I think that is very important. It is also very fun to be around students, because you can learn a lot from them as well. The school I work at is a small one with 30 students. We live out in the countryside, very close to nature in a fishing village on the shoreline by the north Atlantic ocean.

My hobbies are traveling, knitting, and spending time with family and friends. I have four children and six grandchildren and two on the way.

We in the EFC are preparing for a conference that will be held in Kristiansand, Norway on June 11-13 2027. The theme is "Education and Learning: unlocking opportunities for all". I am very excited to see you all there, listen to good educational presentations, meet new women and enjoy myself.

Vilborg Ása Bjarnadóttir

Chair of the European Forum Committee



Muriel Marsh



Norway

My name is Muriel Marsh and I am the EFC member from Norway.

I have been a member of DKG since 2015 and have held office both for my own Chapter, Delta, and at State level for Norway. I was State President from 2023-2025 and Chapter President during the pandemic years. At present I am Chapter treasurer and Past president on the Norwegian board.



I have been the EFC representative for the last two biennia and will continue until the summer of 2027.

Here I have had much pleasure in getting to know our organisation from a European perspective, as well as meeting members in person each year. I have taken part in three European Conferences and one Convention. My role in the EFC has been as a minute-taker.

I retired as a primary teacher in 2019, after almost 40 years teaching primarily the lower grades. My education as a teacher is from England and I took a preschool teaching certificate after moving to Norway in 1978. I am 73 years old and married a Norwegian in 1975. I have two sons born respectively in 1981 and 1984. I am very fortunate to also have four wonderful grandsons; the oldest will be eighteen this autumn! I am also fortunate to have my family in England only a two-hour flight away.

I now have double citizenship which I gained in 2022, after Norwegian law made it possible. I look forward to working in the EFC this year, as we combine our efforts with the Norwegian State board in preparing the next European Conference in Kristiansand in 2027.

Muriel Marsh

Secretary of the European Forum Committee





Thi Finkemeyer



Germany

I am **Thi Finkemeyer** and I was born in Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar) in 1952. Due to the political situation in my country, my family left in 1968 for Addis Ababa where my father taught anatomy at the Haile Selassie University. After two years we moved to Dar Es Salaam where my father was posted for another three years to teach at the medical college in Dar. I left after two years to study in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

After my bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from Mount St. Vincent university, I came to Germany. I have been living ever since in Oldenburg, Germany, with my husband and three children.

I taught English at a private language institute as well as at the University of Applied Sciences where I taught technical English to Students who were studying Surveying, Audiology and Robotics. I retired from teaching in 2012 but am busy taking care of our guesthouse. I have been a DKG MEMBER for over 25 years and served as vice president for four years.

Thi Finkemeyer





Diana Bell



Great Britain

I'm **Diana Bell**. I was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in the north of England, but moved south aged about 7. I joined DKG in 1991. Having had various roles, such as State President (three times) Parliamentarian, Chapter President and Chapter Treasurer. I'm now the European Forum member for Great Britain, as well as the GBState Webmaster and Editor of GB News in Brief. I have been a European Forum member, each time I have been president and chaired the Forum from 2008-2010.

After nearly 20 years as a teacher in very deprived areas of London, followed by 20 years as a Junior School Headteacher, I retired in 2006. I then ran the London Retired Headteachers' Society for 15 years and this year closed a teachers' charity after serving 53 years on the board.

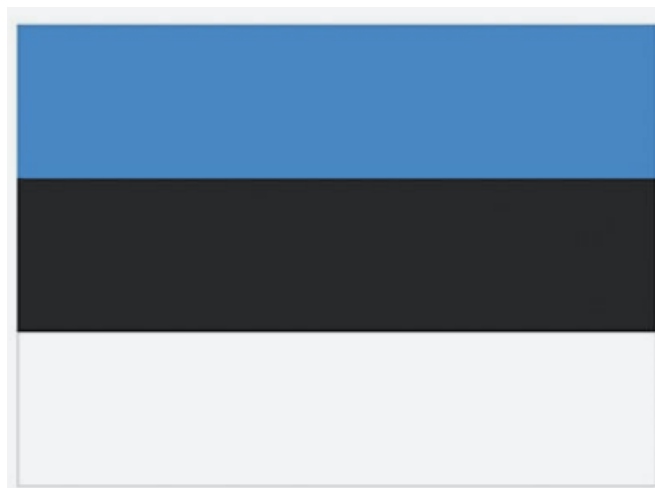
I have enjoyed attending many conventions and conferences, and now I am looking forward to seeing you all in Kristiansand for the EF Conference in 2027.

Diana Bell





Anu Ariste



Estonia

Hello! I'm **Anu** from Estonia.

I'm an English teacher at Ääsmäe School, a small school where people know and care about each other. I have been a teacher for 20 years, and I still find it rewarding to work with young people, discover new ways of teaching and see my students grow in confidence.

What I enjoy most about being a teacher is the opportunity to support my students, encourage their curiosity and help them discover their own strengths.

I have been a member of DKG since 2010 and have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to serve in several different positions. I have served as State President and State Secretary, as well as Chapter President. I was also a member of the EF Committee from 2010 to 2014.

Currently, I am the Membership Chair for DKG Estonia. I joined DKG because I value connection, cooperation and lifelong learning.



I enjoy meeting other educators, exchanging ideas and learning about education in different countries. For me, one of the most special things about DKG is the opportunity to make genuine friendships across borders.

I enjoy travelling, going to the theatre and concerts, sports, spending time in nature, and discovering new places. I am always happy to learn something new and meet interesting people

I'm very much looking forward to serving on the EF Committee, meeting more DKG members, sharing experiences and creating many wonderful new memories together!

Anu Ariste



Mena Alsema Weggemans



The Netherlands

My name is **Mena Alsema Weggemans** from the Netherlands. I have been a member of DKG Epsilon since 2016 and sat on the board of Epsilon in different capacities.



For almost 40 years I have been a teacher in primary education ,retiring eight years ago. I have mainly taught in small schools with two or three classes. I also have been a teacher at a school for children of asylum seekers for five years. That was very rewarding work.

I am married and we have a daughter, two sons and three granddaughters. Fortunately, they all live nearby.

Mena Alsema Weggemans



Dr Ann-Katrin Swärd



Sweden

Dr. Ann-Katrin has around 30 years of experience as a teacher in ordinary and inclusive/special needs education, mostly with children in pre- and primary schools. After her master's and her PhD, she created courses in the field of Special Needs Education at different universities and was responsible for both teaching and planning.

Her research is qualitative and mostly about literacy – how to prevent failure in reading and writing. For many years Ann-Katrin has worked on



international projects. Collaboration and teaching at different universities in Europe and outside, has been an important part of her work.

As a guest professor at Hacettepe university in Ankara she started courses for doctoral students and worked there every spring for 6 years, as well as being . invited as a key-note-speaker at different conferences. She also has many articles and books published and one of the latest is Positive Special Education. Theories, Applications and Inspiration, Routledge 2024.

Ann-Katrin retired in 2025 as assistant .prof/senior lecturer at Gothenburg University but continues to write books, articles and has some ongoing research projects. She was the Swedish president in DKG 2013-2015, now board member, both in AU, Alpha and EF

Dr Ann-Katrin Swärd



Henna Perätalo



Finland

Hello, my name is **Henna Perätalo**, and I am a member of Alpha Chapter (Helsinki) in Finland. I have been a member of DKG since 2022, and I have served as the treasurer of my local chapter for several years.



I am now starting my second term on the European Forum Committee, where I also serve as treasurer.

This summer, I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in DKG's IGNITE leadership training. It was an inspiring and empowering experience that I highly recommend to everyone who can take part.

I am also very excited about the Winnovation project, which we have started promoting in Finland.

The project aims to inspire and empower young women to pursue STEM fields and encourage them to develop their skills in entrepreneurship and leadership. I believe this is an important and inspiring goal, and I am looking forward to seeing how the project develops.

I have been working in education for almost ten years. Although my academic background is in physics, for the past five years I have been working passionately in entrepreneurship education alongside teaching physics and chemistry. Entrepreneurship education has truly won me over, as it gives me the opportunity to see young people have those "aha" moments and gain practical knowledge, skills, and confidence for their future working lives.

I find it incredibly rewarding to help young people discover their own strengths and possibilities. Outside of work and DKG, my hobbies include activities with Junior Chamber International (JCI), reading, self-development, and traveling. Nature is also very important to me, and I love spending time outdoors and taking photos with my phone.



I am very happy to be part of DKG and look forward to continuing to learn, contribute, and connect with women across Europe and beyond.

Henna Perätalo, Treasurer of the European Forum Committee

**NEWS FROM THE
DIFFERENT
MEMBER COUNTRIES OF
DKG EUROPE!**



News from Norway



Anne Louise Theil

Anne Louise Theil is one of our newest members of Epsilon Chapter in Kristiansand, Norway. She has a bachelor's degree in Social Education and a master's degree in Early Childhood Education, and works fulltime as a kindergarten teacher with children aged 0-6.

Her main focus in teaching is creating a space of inclusivity that furthers equity and celebrates diversity, to make sure children grow from a strong sense of self and belonging.

Louise will be hosting one of the breakout sessions at the European Forum Conference in Kristiansand in June, she is knowledgeable, fun and kind and you are all welcome to come and hear her presentation.

She, together with her supervisors at the University of Agder has recently published an article in Nordic early childhood education research with the title: "Sámi Contentin Kindergarten: From National Commitment to Local Implementation". *Samisk innhold i barnehagen:*



Fra nasjonal forpliktelse til implementering | Nordiskbarnehageforskning.

The purpose of their study was to gain insight into what influences the choices made regarding kindergarten teachers' work with Sámi content in kindergartens in Agder, Norway. Based on data from questionnaire responses from 30 kindergarten teachers, an analysis revealed that decisions are influenced by whether the work is perceived as meaningful and the knowledge needed is accessible.

The primary challenge found was the absence of direct contact with Sámi culture, which among other things lead to a lack of regular planning for Sámi content. In addition, a general lack of knowledge was shown to be the cause of decision-making based on fear of disrespect and cultural appropriation.

This posed the risk of the cultural content being objectified. Limited resources, such as time, staffing, and lack of readily available academic literature, also act as structural barriers, and resource scarcity appears to cause kindergarten teachers to deprioritize Sámi content in a busy daily routine.

In educational practices, Sámi content is continually deprioritized in favor of cultures that are physically represented in the child group, and overall, the findings indicate that the work in Agder is perceived as a balancing act between ambition and uncertainty. This ultimately means that Sámi perspectives risk being marginalized or only symbolically included.

Implications for practice and policy highlight the need to strengthen kindergarten teachers' competencies and ensure sufficient staffing, as well as to develop good, accessible resources for Sámi content beyond those used for celebrating the national day.

Anna Louise Theil, Norway



News from Estonia



Siiri Vimberg

The Gift of DKG: Growth, Connection and Collaboration in Estonia

As another biennium quietly draws to a close, I am preparing to pass on the role I have had, the privilege of holding in DKG Estonia.

Looking back, I realise that this has been a time of tremendous personal and professional growth. The greatest gift I will take with me is

not a particular project or achievement, but the relationships we have built and the conversations we have shared.

I never imagined I would meet so many kind, inspiring and strong women through DKG—people whose ideas and support have influenced not only my work as an educator, but many other areas of my life as well. This is what I wish for every current and future DKG member in Estonia: to discover the power of connection, inspiration and belonging.



DKG Estonia was established in 2008 and today our work continues through two chapters, Alpha and Beta. For a small organisation, the international 100 by 100 Centennial

Membership Challenge may seem almost utopian. Yet perhaps the challenge is less about reaching a number and more about asking ourselves: Who needs to know that DKG exists? Visibility and communication matter. There may be educators who would find a supportive and inspiring professional community in DKG but simply have not heard about us yet. By sharing our projects, stories and opportunities more actively, we can make it easier for potential members to find us.

Our two chapters continue to create meaningful opportunities. Alpha has been inspired by Louise Evans's "5 Chairs 5 Choices" approach and is exploring how this work could be developed further. Beta is continuing its successful project supporting beginning teachers, which was honoured by the Educational Excellence Committee with an Impact Spotlight. Both projects demonstrate that meaningful impact can begin with relatively small initiatives, when people are willing to share their knowledge and experience.

Collaboration and communication remain at the heart of DKG.

One of our recent highlights was welcoming Anne Clifford from Canada, whose presentation, "Understanding You and Leading Together: Enhancing Self-Awareness and Teamwork in Your Chapter," introduced us to the Myers-Briggs model and encouraged us to consider how self-awareness can strengthen teamwork.

Our own member Maria Rozbaum also inspired us by exploring the importance of collaboration networks. We were equally delighted to welcome DKG sisters from Finland. Their visit opened the door to closer



cooperation between Estonian and Finnish members and reminded us that DKG's network can cross borders while remaining deeply personal.



Cooperation between Estonian and Finnish members

During this biennium, I have also learned that leadership is not about having all the answers. It is about creating space for others to contribute, encouraging new ideas, giving people opportunities to grow. I therefore encourage our members to run for positions, join committees, propose projects, present at conferences and step forward when opportunities arise.

Most importantly, participate. Attend conferences and chapter meetings. Join projects. Listen, ask questions, share your ideas and invite others to join us.



Growth does not happen simply because we belong to an organisation. It happens when we become involved. Collaboration does not happen automatically—it begins when someone takes the first step and asks, “What could we do together?”

DKG Estonia may be a small organisation, but we can be visible, active, courageous and connected. If we continue to communicate, participate and build relationships across chapters and countries, our future will be bright.

My term will soon come to an end, but the relationships will continue. I am deeply grateful to belong to DKG, and I hope every current and future member will find here what I have found: growth, connection, inspiration and the joy of making meaningful changes.

Siiri Vimberg , State President of Estonia



News from Finland



DKG IGNITE: Sisterhood and Shared Learning



***Jenni Korte & Henna Perätalo
received their Ignite certificates***

DKG Ignite was a multidimensional experience that taught us a great deal, but above all, it gave us a chance to pause and reflect on how we want to develop DKG, especially in Europe, where our membership numbers are genuinely quite low.

At first, it was a bit of a shock to realise that we were the only Europeans there. Let this serve as an encouragement for others to apply: the trip and the training were truly rewarding experiences, and it is absolutely worth applying for from Europe as well.



While both of us have visited the US before, you only truly begin to understand real life, the local conversations, the challenges, and the reality of schools once you experience them firsthand. What you see in the news about the US can be very far from the day-to-day reality of schools and educators. This trip ultimately provided us with an abundance of insight.

The decision to apply for DKG Ignite was ultimately made during a business trip, while relaxing in a swimming pool in Tallinn. Our professional lives involve juggling many different projects and courses at the same workplace and, of course, our beloved hobby, DKG.

We had heard a lot of wonderful things about this DKG's leadership training, but we were also a bit hesitant about whether we were accomplished enough as DKG members to apply, given that we had both only been members for a few years.

On hindsight, these kinds of doubts are not very wise, and we want to encourage all members to seek out this training as early as possible. That is truly the best way to get to know others better and to start leveraging the benefits of the training in your own work and in developing DKG.

We didn't actually even believe that both of us would get selected, but in the true spirit of sisterhood, we coached and cheered each other on with our applications and it paid off!. For us, this is also one of DKG's greatest strengths, as peer mentoring and brainstorming are very familiar to us in Finland, especially through our doctoral dissertation discussions. We support each other, give feedback on our respective projects, and help make things happen that might otherwise never get off the ground.



At DKG Ignite, we stayed in university student dorms in shared twin rooms. The roommates were paired up or selected through some method unknown to us participants. It was both surprising and wonderful to see how well these room assignments worked out, seemingly by chance(?); over the course of the week, many formed truly close and deep bonds with their roommates, even though we didn't spend much time in our rooms due to the intensive nature of the course.

Both of us found a great deal in common with our respective roommates, and it was wonderful to have someone to chat with in the evenings, reflecting on the course themes as well as life in general.

There were 20 of us in total, and we also got to know the other participants surprisingly well during the week, since we spent so much quality time together.

By the time the course started, we (Jenni and Henna) had already been traveling together for over two weeks. We first attended the DKG Convention in Denver, followed by a week of vacationing in San Francisco.



When DKG Ignite kicked off, we unexpectedly became the center of attention right at the welcome dinner, simply by chatting with our table



Before welcoming dinner of the Ignite 2026

about our vacation in San Francisco the week before.

Our intention was just to briefly share what we had been up to, but our story about how we accidentally ended up visiting a local school turned out to be the funniest story of the week for many. In addition to our own table, we ended up retelling the story multiple times throughout the welcome dinner, finally sharing it with the entire Ignite group and our tale brought about endless, disbelieving laughter from the audience.

We quickly realised that in the US, you really cannot just wander in to look around a school, which is exactly what had accidentally happened to us!

In Finland, there wouldn't be anything strange about this, as schools don't have security guards, fences, or strict ID badges, and the doors to most educational institutions are completely unlocked. So, there was a wonderful, lighthearted culture shock experienced on both sides right on the very first evening.

The training we received in Austin, at the University of Texas McCombs Business School, was high-quality and engaging, though much of the content was already quite familiar to us.



Because of this, the most important and rewarding aspect for us was getting to know our DKG sisters, most of whom were from the US.

We did manage to see a bit of the local sights around the area, but the days were long and spent mostly together. As a result, after just a couple of days,

We could remember everyone's names quite smoothly and already knew a great deal about one another. Of course, there could have been even more time for discussion. Perhaps in the future, we will get to share our expertise and continue our humor-filled conversations when we meet at conventions and other events.

Without a doubt, the most valuable takeaway for all of us was expanding and diversifying our own DKG networks. Most of us didn't know each



Graduation of the Ignite 2026

other beforehand, but now we feel we can easily and effortlessly reach out to one another whenever the need arise.



We have launched the Winnovation project in Finland, which encourages young women to pursue careers as entrepreneurs, leaders, and in STEM fields that are traditionally perceived as male dominated. Alongside the Convention, DKG Ignite provided a wonderful opportunity to bounce these ideas around.

In Finland, we firmly believe that DKG must have a clearer mission regarding its purpose to attract younger generations of female educators.

Many teachers have been socialized into the role of the “good girl” and education itself is a highly female-dominated profession. Do we know how to help younger generations of women break out of this mold? We are a network of female educators with every opportunity to make an impact in schools.

In DKG Finland, we want to train teachers to understand how they can better support and empower girls. Clear research evidence shows that the expectations placed on young people heavily define what they strive for. If we expect girls to become leaders, entrepreneurs, and to enter STEM fields, that is exactly what will happen more and more.

At the same time, we strengthen the DKG network and create increasingly meaningful content for our activities. We believe these are precisely the kinds of things Annie Webb Blanton wanted to influence when she founded DKG.



We were also fortunate in that the newly elected International President of DKG, Connie Rensink, acted as a dorm mom for us during DKG Ignite, spending the entire week with us on campus. In addition to participating in all the official programming alongside us, Connie wanted to have one-on-one conversations with people to hear their thoughts and opinions on how to develop our organization. We received strong support from her for our ideas regarding the Winnovation project, and we also got other enthusiastic tips on the topic from our US peers. Perhaps we should channel our energy into promoting this goal across the entirety of Europe as well.

You can see more photos from our trip on Instagram (especially in the Ignite highlights):@dkgfinland\

If you would like to hear more about Winnovation, welcome to our Visionary Network online meetings on the first Wednesday of every month!



Jenni Korte & Henna Perätalo in Austin, Texas.

You can always find the current link on the Winnovation project Linked In-site, or you can request it directly from us. Winnovation can also be found on Instagram:

@winnovation_project We will also be speaking about the Winnovation project in Norway at the European Forum Conference in Kristiansand on June 11-13, 2027. Hope to see you there!

DKG Sisters Jenni Korte & Henna Perätalo, Finland



News from Germany



Ten Names Return Home:



Sabine Krause

Stolpersteine for the Hoffmann and Pagener Families in Rastede

DKG Society International Germany joins the commemoration on 23 September 2026 – "Women Remember, Learn, Shape the Future"

"Man has no price, but dignity."

Immanuel Kant

A Wednesday at Noon

At noon on Wednesday, 23 September 2026, Rastede was not quiet. About 500 people gathered in the schoolyard of the KGS Rastede on Wilhelmstraße: students, residents, visitors from surrounding towns, and three guests who had come a very long way.



The Hoffmann family with students of KGS Rastede.
(photo Sabine Krause)



The Hoffmann family with students of KGS Rastede.

Two daughters and a grandson of the Hoffmann family had travelled from Australia to be present when their family's names were returned to the town their relatives had been forced to leave almost ninety years ago.

The students of the KGS Rastede opened the gathering. In short, moving readings they told the stories of the two Jewish families who once lived on what is now Raiffeisenstraße. They did not tell them as distant history; they told them as the stories of neighbors, schoolchildren and families from their own town.



Figure 1
"Stolpersteine"
for the Hoffmann
family(photo:
Sabine Krause)

Then the gathering set off as a silent procession along Wilhelmstraße, Bahnhofstraße and Oldenburger Straße to Raiffeisenstraße. In front of houses No. 16 and No. 19, people placed photographs and roses. Then they stepped onto the pavements, one by one, to look down at the ten new brass stones - the "Stolpersteine" set into the ground.



Procession to Raiffeisenstraße (photo: Anja Szyłtowski)



The message was clear: remembering the victims of National Socialism, and standing against antisemitism and racism, belongs in the middle of town, in public, where everyone can see it.

The Hoffmann Family – Raiffeisenstraße 16

Shortly after 1900, David Hoffmann and his wife Selma, daughter of a cattle dealer from Westerstede, settled in Rastede. Between 1904 and 1908 they had four children: Arend, Siegfried, Carla and Hermann. The children went to school in Rastede and later to secondary school in Oldenburg. On Jewish holidays the family went to the synagogue in Oldenburg. David Hoffmann served as a German soldier throughout the First World War. From 1922 the family owned the house at what was then Knoopstraße, today Raiffeisenstraße 16.

David was a respected cattle dealer and employer, and Selma was known as a helpful neighbour.

From the mid-1920s, antisemitic agitation reached Rastede as well, including NSDAP hate meetings in 1927 at an inn right next to the Hoffmanns' home. After 1933, exclusion followed quickly: the boycott of Jewish businesses, expulsion from clubs, neighbours turning away, and finally not even being allowed to shop. Selma Hoffmann died in May 1933, aged 60, and did not live to see what her family went through.

Siegfried Hoffmann was engaged to a non-Jewish woman. The couple was insulted and defamed. While they were preparing to flee, the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935 made their relationship a crime. Siegfried was arrested and taken to the remand prison in Oldenburg on 18 January 1936.



He died there four days later because of mistreatment.

The official version called it suicide.

His death made it clear to his siblings that they had to leave. With the help of a friend from Rastede, Friedrich Kröger, who stood guarantor for him, Arend reached South Australia in January 1938. Hermann and Carla followed later that year. Their father, David, then 61, could not bring himself to leave Germany. In 1940 he was driven out of the Weser-Ems region and forced into Hamburg. On 8 November 1941 he was deported to the Minsk ghetto. All traces of him are lost after December 1942.

Carla came back to Rastede only once, in 1952, to sell the house. At the Jewish cemetery in Westerstede she had her father's name added to her mother's gravestone, because he has no grave of his own.

The Pagener Family – Raiffeisenstraße 19

Anna Pagener, née de Levie, was born in Rastede and was a cousin of the Hoffmann children. In 1925 she married the cattle dealer Norbert Pagener from Epe in Westphalia. In 1926 they moved into the house that is today Raiffeisenstraße 19, and their daughters were born there: Ruth in 1926 and Ingrid in 1928.

When the Nazis came to power, Ruth was six and Ingrid four. They were no longer invited to birthday parties, and their friends were forbidden to play with them. At school they were bullied, and Nazi teachers encouraged classmates to beat them on the way to school. The girls could not even defend themselves, because their parents had been threatened with arrest if they ever touched a non-Jewish child.



The family lost its livelihood and left Rastede in 1937. After several failed attempts to escape and time in prison for both parents, they reached the Netherlands in 1939, though they had to live apart. After the German invasion they were interned in the Westerbork camp, where a train left "for the East" every Tuesday. Ruth was forced to perform with the "Westerbork Girls" revue.

Anna was made a barracks supervisor. In 1943 she was dismissed because she had tried to save a friendly family from deportation by hiding them. It was a quiet act of courage at great personal risk.

In January 1944 the family was deported to Theresienstadt, and in May to Auschwitz. Norbert was murdered there; his date of death was officially set as 31 October 1944. Anna, Ruth and Ingrid were sent on to the Stutthof camp and lost their lives on the death marches shortly before the end of the war.

Their date of death was set as 28 February 1945. Anna was 40. Ruth was 19. Ingrid was 17.



"Stolpersteine" for the Pagener family (Photo: Sabine Krause)

There was no funeral for them and no gravestone. Now there are four small brass stones in front of the house where they once lived.



“Stolpersteine” for the Pagener family (Photo: Sabine Krause)

Stolpersteine: The World's Largest Decentralised Memorial

The stones in Rastede are part of an art project that began in Cologne. On 16 December 1992, fifty years after Heinrich Himmler's decree ordering the deportation of Sinti and Roma to Auschwitz, the artist Gunter Demnig set a first inscribed stone into the pavement in front of Cologne city hall. From this grew the idea of the Stolpersteine, or "stumbling stones": small concrete cubes, 10 by 10 centimetres, covered with a brass plate. Each one is placed in front of the last freely chosen home of a person persecuted by the Nazis. Most begin with the words "Here lived ...", followed by the name, year of birth and a few key facts about what happened to that person.

The Stolpersteine remembers everyone the Nazi regime persecuted: Jews, Sinti and Roma, political opponents, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, victims of the "euthanasia" murders and many others. The project follows the idea that "a person is only forgotten when their name is forgotten". Each stone is still made by hand, with the letters hammered into the brass one at a time.

More than 30 years after it began, about 116,000 Stolpersteine have been laid in more than 1,860 municipalities in 31 European countries. That makes them the largest decentralized memorial in the world. What makes it unique is that it does not stand in one central place. It lies scattered across ordinary streets, in front of ordinary houses, in the places where people were torn out of everyday life. Nobody trips over a Stolperstein with their feet. We stumble over it with our minds and hearts, and to read it, we must bow our heads.



The project is also carried out by civil society. It depends on local initiatives, historians, schools, relatives and sponsors who research each life story, pay for the stones and organize the laying.

In Rastede, the municipal council approved the project in March 2025. The Stolpersteine Rastede e.V. arranged the first laying for the Hattendorf family at Schloßstraße 16 on 9 February 2026. With the ten stones on Raiffeisenstraße, Rastede's local memorial continues to grow.

Our Role as DKG Society International Germany

As women who teach, bring up children and shape educational life, we know how much depends on what children learn about dignity, belonging and responsibility, and on what they are denied.

The story of Ruth and Ingrid Pagener shows this very painfully. Their school, which should have been a place of safety and learning, became a place of humiliation and violence, and teachers encouraged it. For us as educators, this is a lasting warning and a responsibility.

This is why DKG Society International Germany decided to contribute to a Stolperstein in Rastede. Since October 2025, we have been a member of the Stolpersteine Rastede e.V. This connection also inspired the motto for our work in 2025–2026 and 2026–2027:

"Women Remember, Learn, Shape the Future"

Women remember. The stories told in Rastede are also stories of women: Selma Hoffmann, the helpful neighbour. Carla Hoffmann, who came back once to give her father a name on a gravestone. Anna Pagener, who risked her own safety in Westerbork to hide a family. Ruth and Ingrid, whose lives ended before they had really



begun. Remembering them by name gives them back some of the dignity that was taken from them.

Women learn. Remembrance only lasts when it is passed on. On 23 September it was the students of the KGS Rastede who researched the fates of their former neighbours and told them in public. This is exactly what we as women educators want to support: young people who ask questions, look closely and find words for what happened.

Women shape the future. The procession through the centre of Rastede, which went ahead despite all the obstacles, showed that remembrance is also a stand for today. Antisemitism, racism and the devaluing of people did not end in 1945. Wherever human dignity is questioned again, we want to speak up, in our classrooms, in our communities and in our international network.

Keeping the Names Alive

When the photographs have been taken away, the ten brass stones will stay. They will shine a little brighter whenever someone polishes them, and they will make passers-by stop, read and remember David, Selma, Arend, Siegfried, Carla and Hermann Hoffmann, and Norbert, Anna, Ruth and Ingrid Pagener.

We are grateful to the Stolpersteine Rastede e.V. for their tireless work, to the KGS Rastede for hosting the gathering and for the commitment of its students, and to the Hoffmann family for travelling from Australia and sharing this day with us. Their presence was a reminder that these stories are not over. They continue in children and grandchildren on the other side of the world, and in all of us who choose to remember.



Sources

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Sabine Krause , State President Germany

More news from Germany



Kooperative Gesamtschule Rastede, Deutschland

Cooperative Comprehensive School Rastede, Germany

Together we can do it! – Challenge Project



Daniela von Essen

The “Challenge” project at KGS Rastede isn’t a competition, but a personal challenge to yourself. Eighth-grade students have the opportunity to choose a self-directed, extracurricular challenge and complete it independently in a group of 5-6 students during a two-week break from

school in June.

Most groups leave Rastede to carry out their projects at different places by bike. The students are not allowed to bring cellphones and therefore must plan their trip very well. Reading maps is one of their most important tasks. They also must choose their accommodation carefully beforehand, since they only have ten euros per person per day, and they still have to pay for food for everyone in the group.

The challenges are supervised by twelfth-grade students and university students. They are not allowed to help and may only step in in a real emergency. The projects themselves include, for example, sporting, artistic, or social activities aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The participating students have half a year to plan their challenge before leaving school for 14 days before the start of the summer holidays, true to the motto: “Out of the comfort zone” to “learning with head, heart and hand”.



The project kicks off in January. An initial event in the school gym with all 8th-grade students will focus on introducing the project and brainstorming initial project ideas. Approximately one week later, a follow-up meeting, themed "My Profile" will take place, where students will explore their interests, strengths, and what challenges them. After a group formation phase, the students will refine their project ideas and present them to the selection committee. Until the start of the challenge in June, there is still time to get to know their mentors and complete further planning steps, such as fulfilling the tasks assigned by the committee, like test packing, completing a 70 km bike tour, researching and cooking recipes, and so on.

We find this project so important because challenges offer an ideal learning environment in which students develop skills for an unpredictable future. Challenge projects are practical, inclusive, and integrative. They connect learning content with the world of life and work in a future-oriented way.

The challenge project team consists of teachers and our cooperation partner (The Making Challenges Easy initiative), which actively supports us in implementing the project. We also work closely with the University of Oldenburg. Furthermore, the company Vierol provides financial support for our students through a strengths sponsorship. The KGS Rastede Parents Association also makes it possible each year to purchase, among other things, up-to-date maps for the implementation of the group.

Daniela von Essen, Germany



News from The Netherlands



The Alpha/Delta Chapter in the Netherlands has adopted a local refugee center for unaccompanied minor girls, offering support, connection, and encouragement as the girls build new lives.

The Alpha/Delta Chapter in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, has taken meaningful action by partnering with a refugee center that provides shelter and guidance to minor girls who arrived in the Netherlands alone. These young residents come from a range of countries, including Somalia, Eritrea, Nigeria and Syria, each carrying their own story of resilience and hope.

At the center, the girls are given opportunities to grow academically, socially, and personally.



Marie-Antoinette Hubers de Wolf & Carola van Zanen- van Rijn in front of the refugee center



They attend school and learn Dutch, an essential step toward integrating into their new communities. In addition, they receive swimming lessons, a valuable life skill in a country where water is part of daily life.

Daily routines at the center also help the girls develop independence and a sense of shared responsibility. They take part in cleaning their own rooms and contribute to maintaining common spaces, reinforcing the importance of caring for themselves and their environment.

By adopting this center, the Alpha/ Delta Chapter demonstrates its dedication to supporting vulnerable youth and fostering a welcoming community. Their involvement helps ensure that these girls, far from home and family—feel seen, supported, and empowered as they navigate their new beginnings.

The Alpha/Delta chapter helped at the open house and that was a lot of fun.



Open house at the refugee center in the Netherlands





Playing games and baked goodies made by the girls from the refugee center on open house day.



Together with the girls shopping for the refugee center

For the celebration of our 50th membership year of DKG the Netherlands, we raised money for the refugee center with all members.

Together with three girls from the center, we bought items to

improve the living space of the girls, including lamps, tables with plants, cushions and small tables in their rooms. The girls were very happy and gave us a big hug.



Plants, plant tables and a standing lamp for the refugee center.

“Whether we bring homemade lunches, play games, help with homework, or support the refugee center’s open house, we’re grateful for every moment we get to spend with the girls and look forward to continuing this work together.”

Marie-Antoinette Hubers de Wolf & Carola van Zanen- van Rijn

Alpha/Delta Chapter from the Netherlands



News from Great Britain



Great Britain



Aileen Dickson

It's Autumn already! Where does time go? I hope you all enjoyed the lovely summer we have had.

At the end of June, I travelled to Colorado to attend the DKG International Convention at the Gaylord Rockies Resort and Convention Centre. It was an enormous venue, and I had a wonderful time meeting new DKG friends and other European State Presidents.

Our days were busy with voting on proposed changes to the International Byelaws. It was a very interesting process, and I was pleased to be able to take part. Between voting there were many Breakout sessions covering a wide range of topics from Leadership to Photography.



During the week Connie Rensink from Texas was inaugurated as our new International President and Barbara Carlsen from Norway as our European Regional Director. I'm sure they will both fulfil their roles excellently.

Over the summer there have been two trips to London. Thanks to Barbara Kern for organising our outing to the Science Gallery at London Bridge and Joan Carroll for arranging a wonderful Thames River trip to Greenwich. Both occasions were very much enjoyed.

Unity Harvey has decided that the time has come for her to resign from her role as Nominations Member. Thank you to Unity for all her work in carrying out this role.

Many of you will have known Anne Cattoor who sadly passed away earlier this year. Anne was our second European Regional Director and will be remembered fondly.

The year ahead promises to be a busy one as we celebrate the 50 th Anniversary of Great Britain's membership of DKG and we also work to grow our membership in this wonderful organisation.

Aileen Dickson, State President of Great Britain



News from Iceland



Hrund Logadóttir

Autumn greetings from Iceland and a few notes from our work. During the past year, the Icelandic DKG chapters made a dedicated effort to recruit new members and strengthen their membership. As a result, membership increased by approximately 20 women during the year.

The Icelandic State Organization is the largest in Europe in terms of membership. This summer, I had the opportunity to attend the DKG International Convention, which was held in Aurora, Colorado. More than 700 women from various parts of the world attended the convention, including 12 women from Europe. I was, however, the only representative from Iceland, and it would have been wonderful if more Icelandic members had been able to attend.



The convention offered a wide range of workshops and sessions covering many interesting topics. However, a considerable amount of time was devoted to reviewing the International Society's governing documents and bylaws. It was particularly interesting to follow the discussions surrounding individual provisions. Among the issues that sparked considerable debate was the question of spirituality and religious references. This topic has, in fact, been discussed on several previous occasions, but this time the prevailing view was that such references should not be included in the governing documents.

Attending international conventions and conferences like this is an invaluable experience. They provide wonderful opportunities to meet DKG members from around the world, stay informed about and participate in current discussions and developments, build new relationships, and experience the different cultures represented within DKG.

What has impressed me most at these conventions and conferences is the strong sense of unity, encouragement, and friendship. There is a genuine desire to get to know women from other countries, exchange ideas, engage in meaningful conversations, and build lasting connections.

The Icelandic State Organization began its autumn and winter activities with a meeting of the Executive Council at the end of September. The meeting brought together the newly elected presidents of our 13 chapters. The current action plan was reviewed, and an outgoing chapter president shared valuable advice and insights into the responsibilities of chapter leadership.



The new chapter presidents were also presented with a series of challenging questions relating to chapter activities and leadership. These questions were discussed and answered through highly productive group work, encouraging reflection, cooperation, and the exchange of ideas.

Since the establishment of the Icelandic State Organization, Icelandic Delta Kappa Gamma members have been actively involved in the international work of the Society. During the 2024–2026 biennium, six Icelandic women served on international committees.

Vilborg Ása Bjarnadóttir, a member of Iota Chapter and First Vice President of the Icelandic State Organization, has now taken on the role of Chair of the European Forum Committee. Pernilla Rein, also a member of Iota Chapter, has accepted an appointment to the International Scholarship Committee. Sigríður Heiða Bragadóttir and Ólöf Helga Thors, both members of Eta Chapter, responded to the invitation to apply for positions on international committees, and both were offered appointments. Unfortunately, Sigríður Heiða was unable to accept her appointment, but Ólöf Helga has accepted a position on the Leadership Development Committee.

Icelandic DKG women therefore continue to demonstrate their strong commitment to international involvement and committee work. In addition, our members have always been enthusiastic participants in international conferences and conventions.

During the past year, I visited six of our chapters as State Organization President and had the pleasure of attending a wonderful variety of enjoyable, interesting, and inspiring meetings. This year, I plan to visit the remaining seven chapters.



I am very much looking forward to these visits, as they provide valuable opportunities to gain insight into the activities of each chapter and to build personal connections with DKG members throughout Iceland.

Brund Logadóttir, State President from Iceland.

News from Sweden



DKG Sweden - Euforia

Reflections and Highlights from Autumn 2026

During the autumn of 2026, DKG Sweden gathered for a national digital meeting where our State President presented insights from the International Convention held in Aurora, Denver. The presentation offered a rich overview of international developments, upcoming initiatives, and personal reflections from the global DKG community.



Ewa Johansson



International Updates from Aurora

The International Executive Board meeting brought several important decisions and announcements. Among the key highlights were the nominations for international leadership roles: Connie Rensink as International President, Barbara Carlsen as Europe Regional Director, and Marie Antoinette Hubers for the Finance Committee.

Several European members were also appointed to international committees, including representation in the European Forum, Vilborg Asa Bjarnarsdottir, the Nominating Committee - Marianne Skardeus and #SecondCentury & Beyond – Ewa Johansson contributing to this work.

A significant motion adopted at the convention concerned the future structure of

international conferences. It was decided that international conferences will no longer be held in odd-numbered years. Instead, members are encouraged to participate in regional conferences, strengthening local engagement and global connection simultaneously.

Looking Ahead: Regional Conferences 2027

The year 2027 will be an exciting one for DKG's regional gatherings. The European Forum Conference will take place in Kristiansand, Norway, 11–13 June, an event that received considerable attention during the Aurora convention. International President Connie Rensink will attend, underscoring the importance of the European region.

Additional regional conferences will be held in Canada in July and Latin America in Mexico, 21–23 October.



Sweden's Contribution: Revitalization and Collaboration

Sweden's ongoing revitalization process was also discussed with members attending the convention. Our national letter to the Board Members of DKG International, shared through the European Forum, aims to inspire chapters across Europe to engage in meaningful dialogue and reflection. The message emphasizes collaboration, renewal, and shared purpose—values that resonate strongly within our organization.

Visits to Epsilon and Phi Chapters

This autumn, State President Ewa Johansson visited Epsilon Chapter in Uppsala, while Treasurer Marianne Skardeus visited Phi Chapter in Falun. Both visits were warm, engaging, and deeply appreciated.

Members shared thoughtful conversations about chapter work, challenges, and opportunities, with revitalization as a central theme. These visits strengthened connections and reaffirmed the vibrancy of our Swedish chapters.

Training for New Chapter Leaders

On 26 September, DKG Sweden hosted a training session in Stockholm for newly elected chapter presidents and treasurers. We were honored to welcome Barbara Carlsen, our Europe Regional Director, who delivered an inspiring lecture on leadership and educational leadership. Her presence added depth and international perspective to the day, and participants left with renewed motivation and confidence.

Inspiration Toward Kristiansand 2027



The meeting also offered a glimpse of what awaits us in Kristiansand next June. The European Forum Conference promises to be a meaningful and well-attended event, and DKG Sweden is actively encouraging members to participate.

The enthusiasm expressed during the Aurora convention suggests that the European region is entering a period of strong engagement and creative collaboration.

Reflections from Aurora

The presentation included personal reflections from the convention. One memorable session featured Pia Nyman (Finland) and Tia Neal (Louisiana), who spoke about The Power of DKG Connection: Global Collaboration in Action. Their work with Collegial Exchange highlighted the growing interest in international cooperation among European members.

The atmosphere in Aurora was marked by innovation, diversity, and a strong sense of global sisterhood. Presenters often used their native languages, reinforcing the international character of DKG. The flag ceremony was a joyful moment—participants carried tiny flags, and Ewa stood proudly in Swedish national dress alongside Helga from Norway.



A Message to Our European Sisters

Finally, DKG Sweden extends warm greetings to our European colleagues. We hope that our letter, shared through the European Forum, will inspire conversations, reflection, and renewed energy within your chapters. Together, we continue to build a strong, connected, and forward-looking DKG.

Ewa Johansson

State President, DKG Sweden

Important Dates and upcoming Events



December 2026:

St Lucia Day online celebration for all members is on December 9, 2026.

The Theme of St. Lucia Day is:

Different ways of celebrating Christmas.

Bulletin: Collegial Exchange submissions deadline is December 15

February 2027



Scholarship Applications due on February 1

March 2027

Bulletin: Journal submissions due on March 1

DKGIEF Educational Project Application due March 1

International Achievement Award recommendations due March 1

International Committee Recommendations due March 1

Please send in articles for the new edition of Euforia before March 5

June 2027

The European Forum Conference June 11-June 13 in Kristiansand Norway.

There are also a lot of virtual events you can attend.

Check the following websites regularly for updates:

www.dkgeurope.org

dkg.org



The European Forum Conference

June 11-June 13 2027 in Kristiansand

Norway.



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KEY WOMEN EDUCATORS
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European Forum

**We hope to meet you all at The European Forum
Conference June 11-June 13 in Kristiansand Norway**



We welcome you



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