



MiKK in Brief

MiKK e.V. was constituted on 10.9.2008 by registration in the register of associations, Local Court of Berlin-Charlottenburg. Prior to this registration, however, other players had begun to "till the field": At the suggestion of Eberhard Carl, who - as a judge at the Higher Regional Court - had been assigned to the Federal Ministry of Justice, the *Bundes-Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Familienmediation (BAFM)* (Federal Association for Family Mediation) initiated the first advanced training measures for the special field of cross-border family mediation.

These trainings were accompanied by different bi-national pilot projects which contributed to a professionalization of the mediation process: There was a lively exchange with the English NGO Reunite which promoted mutual learning; in England and Wales, mediation was offered regularly in cases of cross-border child abduction. In 2000, a ministerial working group was set up with the USA examining the ways and means to solve disputes over custody and rights of access. As a result and on the initiative of the German Ministry of Justice, bi-national co-mediation was accepted as an optional process from 2003 and subsequently established by MiKK's predecessor. Encouraged by the experience gained from these projects, the German-Polish mediation project was initiated - this time at the level of the NGOs and an employee of the mediation office of the European Parliament.

At the second meeting of the German and Polish mediators in Wroclaw (Breslau) in 2007, the guidelines for cross-border mediations were adopted in a declaration which, today, shape the international standard: the 4-B's formula for teams of mediators: bi-national, bi-professional, bi-gender, bi-lingual. The parents should recognize their culture and their language as well as their gender in the team of mediators. All these factors are meant to generate a feeling on the part of the parents that their legal, but also their emotional and psycho-social concerns can be met adequately.

The most important experience from these pilot projects has been the awareness that cross-border mediation forms an independent, special field in the wide range of alternative dispute resolution for which mediators must receive special training.

Thus, the constitution of MiKK e.V. was not only the achievement of some active, resourceful and visionary individuals, but most of all the practical consequence of these pioneering pilot projects which were carried out in exemplary cooperation between the competent Federal Ministry and civil organizations. MiKK was constituted as an autonomous and non-profit NGO to be able to independently represent its cause in a national and international setting. MiKK has been supported by the *Bundes-Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Familienmediation (BAFM)* and by the *Bundesverband Mediation (BM)* as resourceful godparents and has remained closely associated with them ever since.

MiKK advises concerned parents, lawyers and other persons who are professionally involved in cross-border family conflicts as well as institutions such as youth welfare services and consulates on the possibilities of mediation in disputes over custody, child abduction and rights of access to children. MiKK procures qualified bi-national teams of mediators and undertakes all organizational preliminary work necessary to conduct mediation. MiKK trains mediators at home and abroad for cross-border mediation by means of a specially designed training programme. MiKK is actively represented in international bodies which are dedicated to the further development of mediation, its methods and its professional standards. Ultimately, MiKK endeavours to bring home the mediation process to an interested public. For more than ten years, MiKK has assisted thousands of parents in developing sustainable and consensual solutions in seemingly hopeless situations - bearing in mind the interest of the children concerned.

Much has already been achieved, but more lies ahead of us. Today, we would like to extend our cordial thanks to all who have supported MiKK on its way so far!

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