



We are convinced that Montessori education, with its radical trust in the child and in human potential, offers a powerful path toward building both peace and resilience.

Over the past three months, the Montessori Europe Board has been meeting regularly, most often to focus on the logistics of the upcoming Congress in Riga. Yet, beyond these operational meetings, we also held an extended strategic virtual retreat to reflect on the future development of Montessori Europe.

Guided by the principles of the Agenda 2030, we asked ourselves a number of forward-looking questions, the most important of which was: what are our dreams for how Montessori Europe can function at its best, and what directions should guide our work?

There was strong consensus that our organisation should continue to focus on three core pillars: adolescent empowerment, sustainability, and bridging research and practice.

At the same time, we agreed that Montessori Europe should expand its scope of activity beyond the Annual Congress. We are, therefore, exploring other forms of gathering and connection, as well as new ways of increasing our visibility and impact so that we may serve as a creative bridge between communities committed to education and to a more peaceful world.

In recent months, we also adopted two significant organisational policies. The first introduces the new role of a Montessori Europe Board Fellow. Based on our past experiences, we recognise the value of close collaboration with individuals who bring wisdom, expertise, and deep Montessori understanding, even if they are not currently serving as Board members. It is with great joy that we share the news that former Montessori Europe President, Barbara Isaacs, has accepted such a role. She will work with us as a webinar facilitator, mentor, and advisor. We are immensely grateful, and we know her contribution will further the flourishing of Montessori Europe.

The second policy is based on a review of research on the organisation of conferences and congresses. Starting this year, Montessori Europe has an official document that invites Montessori communities across Europe to apply to host the Annual Congress. This policy document, used for the first time (in draft form) during the initial stages of our collaboration with our Latvian partners, ensures smooth and meaningful cooperation between our organisation and local hosts. We warmly invite our national member organisations to read this document (which will be on the congress website when it opens in September) and consider applying to host a future Congress!



With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jarosław".

Jarosław Jendza
President of Montessori Europe

The Resistance: Learning Needs Friction in the Age of AI

Why educators must add friction to learning, not help AI remove it.

At our last Congress in Oslo, many of us were deeply moved by the keynote address by father-and-son duo Eirik and Theis Sjøholm Knudsen, in which they shared their journey of learning, creativity, and the role of resistance in education. Their reflections on how friction can spark curiosity and deepen understanding resonated strongly with our community.

We are grateful that Eirik has taken the time to capture this experience in writing, and that he has generously allowed us to share his blog with you. In it, he reflects on the balance between ease and challenge in the age of AI, and how educators can intentionally create the conditions for meaningful learning.

You can read his full post here: [The Resistance: Learning Needs Friction in the Age of AI](#)



Daring to trust: Critical Encounters with Neuroscience, Peace, & Pedagogical mind

In the summer semester 2024/2025, while teaching two courses: *'Childhood with Respect'* and *'Personalized Approaches to Education'* at my alma mater, the University of Gdansk, I guided my Early Childhood Education students through three compelling texts: *The Best Weapon for Peace: Maria Montessori, Education, and Children's Rights* by Erica Moretti (2021), *Educational Neuroscience: The Basics* by Cathy Rogers & Michael S.C. Thomas (2022), and *Efekt Neuro: Pedagogika i uwodzenie umysłów* [The Neuro Effect: Pedagogy and the Seduction of Minds] by Michal Klichowski (2024). These readings sparked rich dialogue and reflection, aligning closely with the theme of the forthcoming Montessori Europe Congress in Riga 2026: "The Courage to Trust: Nurturing Peace and Resilience through Montessori Education."

Language and Accessibility

All three works stood out for their clarity, accessibility, and conceptual generosity. Students often reflected:

"These authors trust us to think critically. There's no simplification, but nothing is inaccessible."

This tone created a classroom space grounded in trust, inviting inquiry rather than prescribing doctrine.

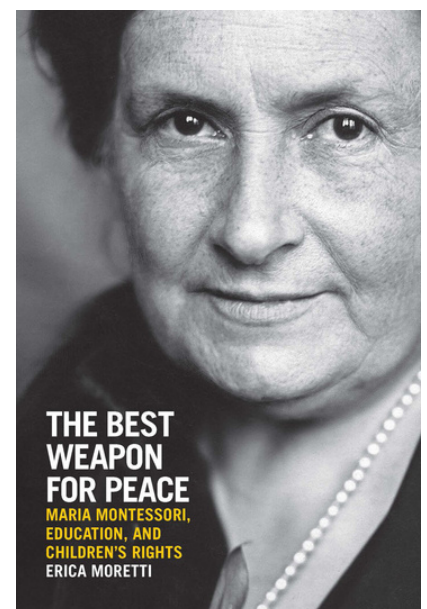
Montessori as an Ethical Agent

In Moretti's book, students encountered Maria Montessori not just as an educational figure but as a humanitarian activist, deeply invested in child rights, pacifism, and social justice.

Discussion questions included:

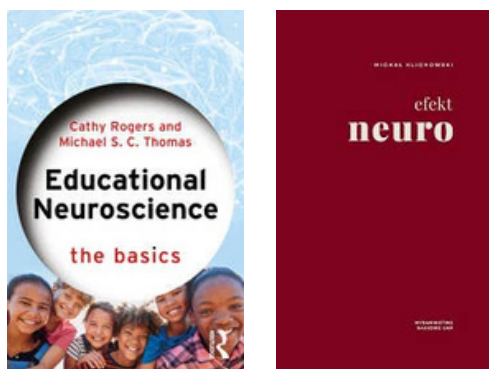
- Why is Montessori's political legacy often downplayed in teacher education?
- How can her work inform contemporary responses to conflict, migration, and inequality?

The connections Moretti draws between trust and resistance resonated deeply, reframing Montessori's pedagogy as inherently political (Moretti, 2021).



Neuroscience with Integrity - and... Caution

Rogers and Thomas' Educational Neuroscience offered scientific insight into emotion, motivation, and how learning unfolds in context – not as fixed processes but as dynamic and socially rooted (Rogers & Thomas, 2022). Yet, alongside enthusiasm, we introduced a critical counterpoint: Klichowski's "The Neuro Effect: Pedagogy and the Seduction of Minds". Based on years of research and critical reflection, Klichowski warns about the "neuro effect" – a sociocultural phenomenon where anything bearing the "neuro-" prefix is granted undue authority (Klichowski, 2024).



He critiques the allure of neuroscience imagery, optimistic neuromyths, and rapid application of untested methods like brain stimulation or visualised MRI claims. Instead, he urges pedagogues to cultivate epistemic humility and experimental literacy: true engagement with neuroscience, not superficial adoption (Klichowski, 2024).

Students responded powerfully:

"Yes, neuroscience can deepen our practice—but Klichowski reminds us not to get carried away by the hype."

During the neuroscience section, one student asked:

"If neuroscience shows how different brains develop unevenly, how do we personalize education without creating labels or deficit mindsets?"

Another said after discussing Klichowski:

"We have to resist calling everything 'neuro' just because it sounds modern. Trust means being grounded, not trendy."

These questions pushed us into deeper territory: exploring how neuroscience-informed practice must be coupled with critical awareness, ethics, and humility.

Reading as Praxis

Together, these three texts offered a pluralistic yet coherent framework: Montessori's legacy centered on trust and dignity; neuroscience offered insights into learning and brain development; Klichowski provided the critical tools needed to navigate potential pitfalls of neuromodish approaches. Our reading became a form of praxis: trusting students, fostering critical thought, and rooting educational practice in both empathy and rigor.

In Light of Congress 2026

As we anticipate the Montessori Europe Congress in Riga, the title "The Courage to Trust" feels not just aspirational but necessary. Trust must be reciprocal – between children and educators, between theory and practice, between neuroscience and pedagogy. These books taught that trust is earned through reflection, inquiry, and the courage to challenge consensus when necessary.

References

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Moretti, E. (2021). *The best weapon for peace: Maria Montessori, education, and children's rights*. University of Wisconsin Press.

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Jarosław Jendza, PhD
jaroslaw.jendza@ug.edu.pl
University of Gdansk, Poland
Montessori Europe President



CARING HURTS – THE CLIMATE ON OUR MINDS

More and more, climate change is taking a toll not only on communities, the environment, and the economy, but also on human minds. During a recent visit, by friends and family members of mine here in Cyprus, the conversation unexpectedly turned serious. With the unusually high temperatures around Northern Europe they were wondering – why did we travel to the Mediterranean if it is just as hot at home? The topic of global warming and worries about the future naturally developed, especially in my younger visitors. Having seen recent climate reports there is a dread they find hard to shake. And they are not alone. Global studies show that the levels of eco-anxiety, worry, fear, and distress about climate change and its potential impacts, are increasing significantly. The worry has also spread into our younger citizens too where nearly 4 in 5 primary aged children show the same dread (<https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/majority-of-under-12s-worried-about-climate-change-survey-shows/>).

What causes eco-anxiety?

Eco-anxiety is primarily caused by a combination of factors related to the perceived and real impacts of climate change through sources such as climate news, social media, school and family discussions and, direct exposure to climate events. I would say it is nearly impossible not to be aware of global warming today. These factors can lead to emotional responses like worry, depression, troubles sleeping, powerlessness and sadness, anger, grief, guilt, restlessness, among others – especially in young people who feel deeply connected to the future of our home, planet Earth.

How can we support our young people?

A first approach would be to listen. Not to dismiss and be judgemental by saying that “you are too young to have such concerns”, but to truly hear and acknowledge their concerns. A further approach may be to normalize the emotion by reassuring them that this is a real-world issue and a realistic and rational response. We can help them identify and value their emotions as not being “bad” emotions, but good emotions, as they are triggered from care, empathy and responsibility. And finally, to emphasize that their goal should not be to eliminate the anxiety but to respond constructively to it. Helpful actions and tools might be to get involved in local initiatives such clean-ups, climate clubs, and writing to policymakers. By taking meaningful action, they would feel empowered rather than overwhelmed.

Perhaps a hopeful closing thought might be: Eco-anxiety means we care. And when we care deeply, we can act. And by acting, we can shape a better future.



Carola

CONNECTING MONTESSORI STUDENTS FOR PEACE & GLOBAL COLLABORATION

There are over 15,000 Montessori schools in more than 140 countries, serving over a million students worldwide. Just imagine how many exciting ideas, questions, and meaningful work are unfolding in Montessori schools around the world – right now.

In a recent Montessori Europe webinar, participants were introduced to the Montessori International Student Council (Monisc) – a global initiative developed and led by Montessori Norway. Monisc connects Montessori students across schools, countries, and cultures, providing a shared platform rooted in peace education, sustainability, and student-led collaboration.

The webinar highlighted how student councils can serve as authentic arenas for empowerment and participation, echoing Maria Montessori's belief that education is the path to peace. The mission of Monisc is to empower students to express their views, take initiative, and contribute to shaping a more just and connected world.

Monisc is a way for students to engage internationally, but also as a structure that supports the development of strong national student councils. In each country, Montessori students are invited to connect across age groups and schools to share experiences, cooperate and create meaningful work. The national councils link into the broader Monisc network, fostering exchange between local and global engagement.

The initiative is about creating real opportunities for students, not just symbolic ones. Students are encouraged to lead their own conversations, host webinars and panel discussions, invite guest speakers, and initiate meaningful international projects. A recent example was a virtual meeting between student council members from Japan and Norway, where students discussed peace, sustainability, and their shared Montessori experience – leaving the meeting inspired and full of ideas. This is the kind of global connection Monisc aims to make possible – not just once, but regularly.

Participation is open to students aged 6 to 18 attending Montessori schools, including both the second and third plane of development – each contributing in their own way. By establishing or joining a student council, Montessori students help strengthen participation, collaboration, and promote children's rights.

Monisc is currently preparing its first international student conference, supported by UNESCO. The event will take place in early 2026 and will combine digital and in-person participation, allowing students from all over the world to meet and share across borders. The conference will feature student-led talks, project presentations from all over the world, cultural exchange, and opportunities to explore themes of peace, sustainability, and global responsibility — all from the perspective of the students themselves.

Montessori schools interested in joining this growing network are warmly invited to connect and take part.

✉ contact@monisc.com

📱 Instagram: @montessoriisc

🌐 Facebook: Montessori International Student Council



INTRODUCING THE ADOLESCENT VOICE COLLECTIVE!

A new platform for adolescent dialogue, trust, and sustainable action

Over the past years, Montessori Europe has been exploring how to meaningfully engage adolescents in shaping our shared future. While earlier iterations of the Adolescent Forum provided moments of insight and inspiration, we recognised the need for a more coherent, participatory, and impactful approach to adolescent voice within our Agenda2030 goals.

In response, we are proud to launch the **Adolescent Voice Collective**, a new platform for collaboration, reflection, and action. This initiative forms a key part of our Agenda2030 pillar on Adolescents and Sustainability, directly supporting our SMART Goals 2.2 and 2.4: the creation of connected, adolescent-led spaces for dialogue and SDG-related action across Europe.



The first gathering of the Adolescent Voice Collective will take place in Riga, Latvia from 27-29 March 2026, alongside our annual Congress. Fifty adolescents – 25 from Latvia and 25 from other European countries and beyond – will come together for a three-day programme designed to explore global challenges, share diverse perspectives, and co-author the first Adolescent Manifesto for Sustainable Futures.

Day One of the programme, titled **Discover and Connect**, will centre on listening – to the world, to one another, and to the issues that concern this generation most. Through historical and cultural exploration of Riga, collaborative workshops on the SDGs, and structured group dialogue, participants will identify the themes that resonate most urgently with them. These will form the foundation for the next day's work.

On Day Two, **Co-Create and Commit**, students will take part in a facilitated Hackathon to co-develop and draft sections of the manifesto. Working in small, diverse groups, they will explore topics such as climate and planetary care, peace and justice, education and equity, digital responsibility, and youth leadership. Their voices, bold, thoughtful, and grounded in lived experience, will be shaped into a collective statement of values, calls to action, and commitments. The result: an Adolescent Manifesto that will guide all future youth engagement linked to Montessori Europe's sustainability work.

On the final day, **Speak and Be Heard**, participants will present their manifesto to the full Congress plenary. Their words will be spoken alongside keynote contributions and serve as a reminder that sustainable education must include the perspectives of the very people it claims to serve. The closing act of the Collective will include an invitation to adult delegates to carry this work forward through authentic partnerships with the adolescents in their care.

The Adolescent Voice Collective is more than a single event. It is the beginning of a sustained effort to integrate adolescent voice into the fabric of Montessori Europe's work and to offer young people the trust, security, and responsibility they need to grow as citizens of a shared world.

We invite all Montessori adolescent environments and educators who share this vision to begin considering who might join us in Riga. Further details on participation and application processes will be shared in the coming months.

For now, we invite you to hold this question:

**What could become possible if we listened, deeply and without interruption,
to the adolescent voice?**



**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING THE ADOLESCENT VOICE COLLECTIVE,
PLEASE EMAIL OFFICE@MONTESSORI-EUROPE.NET FOR MORE DETAILS!**

MONTESSORI EUROPE CONGRESS 2026

Registration Opens 22 September 2025!

Next spring, the Montessori Europe Congress 2026 will take place in **Riga, Latvia, from 27-29 March**, hosted at the University of Latvia's House of Science. This modern, light-filled building—opened in 2019—was designed with sustainability in mind and is home to some 2,000 students and 450 academic staff. Its soaring glass atrium and open, collaborative spaces echo the values of inclusivity and connection that run through Montessori education.

Montessori has a long and resilient history in Latvia. More than a century ago, local educators embraced Maria Montessori's child-centred approach, but these ideas were later suppressed under authoritarian rule. After the restoration of independence, committed teachers, parents, and communities worked tirelessly to revive the philosophy. Today, Latvia is home to around 20-25 Montessori preschools and centres, along with approximately 10 schools offering both lower and upper elementary programmes.

At the heart of this revival is the Montessori Association of Latvia. Founded in 2000 by educators trained in Germany, the Association has played a pivotal role in establishing new centres, organising professional development events, publishing Montessori resources in Latvian, and building partnerships abroad. Their ongoing efforts continue to strengthen the quality and reach of Montessori education across the country.

Latvia itself is a place where deep forests give way to white-sand beaches, and centuries of history blend seamlessly with modern creativity. UNESCO-listed towns, bustling markets filled with seasonal produce, and luminous midsummer traditions all speak to a culture deeply connected to nature and community. The country's recent history – especially the unity of the Singing Revolution, when Latvians chose to raise their voices rather than arms – embodies the spirit of trust and courage that inspires this year's congress theme.

We look forward to welcoming you to Riga next spring – three days of exchanging ideas, building connections with passionate educators, and celebrating the growing power of Montessori education across generations and borders.



UNIVERSITY OF
LATVIA

10 REASONS OTHER THAN THE CONGRESS TO VISIT RIGA!

THE OLD TOWN (VECRĪGA)

A maze of cobbled streets, colourful houses, and historic churches. Don't miss St. Peter's Church for its panoramic city view.

HOUSE OF THE BLACKHEADS

A beautiful Gothic building on Town Hall Square, originally built in the 14th century.

RIGA CATHEDRAL

The largest medieval church in the Baltics, famous for its huge organ and serene cloister.

ART NOUVEAU DISTRICT (ALBERTA IELA AND ELIZABETES IELA)

Riga is one of the world's Art Nouveau capitals — these streets showcase the most impressive facades.

RIGA CENTRAL MARKET

Europe's largest market housed in former Zeppelin hangars, full of local foods, fresh produce, and crafts.

FREEDOM MONUMENT

A national symbol of Latvian independence and a great meeting point.

LATVIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ART

Home to an excellent collection of Latvian and Baltic artworks.

MUSEUM OF THE OCCUPATION OF LATVIA

A moving and informative museum about Latvia's 20th-century history under Soviet and Nazi occupations.

TAKE A CANAL BOAT TOUR

See the city from a different perspective by cruising through its canals and along the Daugava River.

TRY LOCAL FOOD

Taste grey peas with bacon, smoked fish, rye bread, and don't forget to sip the famous Riga Black Balsam herbal liqueur.



2025 ME WEBINAR SERIES

We are delighted to continue our webinars into 2025. Please diarise these dates and click on the registration link to book your space. Our webinars are free of charge and we look forward to seeing you online! Please note that none of our webinars are recorded.

15 September 2025 19:00 (CET): Inspiring a Culture of Innovation, Service and Creative Inquiry

"In a world facing many challenges, our strategic vision reflects the fundamental goal of enabling our graduates to be fully equipped not only to manage the world they will inherit but to thrive in it and make meaningful differences to the lives of those around them. For this vision to be realised, we embrace our responsibility to be good stewards of our human, monetary, and physical resources and to use these for the betterment of our school."

We hope that you will join us in discussion with **Rachel Marks** and **Andrea Ng-Willis** who will share their experiences of guiding their team at Lauremont Lower School in Canada in developing knowledge, skills, and techniques that align with the school's vision: "to inspire a culture of innovation, service, and creative inquiry one student at a time."

The Lauremont Lower School is committed to delivering the Montessori early years and elementary curriculum from Toddler through to Grade 6.

Register [here](#).

20 October 2025 19:00 (CET): Philosophy for Children & Digital Tools: Building Thinking Communities in a Changing World

How can educators promote children to think critically collaboratively while nurturing awareness about our planet?

This webinar introduces Philosophy for Children (P4C), a powerful method that helps children explore big ideas through dialogue, curiosity, and reflection. You will discover how P4C can support children in making sense of our rapidly changing digital world and help build classroom communities that are thoughtful, inclusive, and open to different perspectives. The webinar also introduces an exciting European project called EACH - Early Childhood and Sustainable Citizenship Routes in the Digital Era, which brings together educators from Portugal, Poland, and Italy. Using real classroom examples, the webinar showcases how P4C and digital tools can work hand-in-hand to support sustainability education even with our youngest learners.

Join us as we engage **Dina Mendonça** and **Susana Cadilha** in a discussion to find inspiration, practical ideas, and new ways to help children grow into collaborative, compassionate citizens of the future.

Register [here](#).

08 December 2025 19:00 (CET): Digital Tools with Purpose: A Framework for Climate-Conscious Classrooms

How can digital technologies help us foster a love for the Earth and empower educators and children to face climate crisis challenges?

This webinar will introduce a new educational framework that supports early childhood teachers in using digital tools not just for learning, but for purposeful reflection, collaboration, and climate action. Rooted in the European project EACH – Early Childhood and Sustainable Citizenship Routes in the Digital Era, this approach helps educators weave sustainability and climate awareness into everyday classroom life.

We join **Silvia Demozzi** and **Luca Zanetti** to explore how simple, child-centred digital activities can spark deep conversations, build critical thinking skills, and nurture social and reflective habits. This session also offers practical guidance on how to turn digital learning moments into opportunities for children to connect with nature, care for their communities, and grow into thoughtful, empowered citizens.

Ideal for educators looking to bring sustainability alive in their classrooms without needing to become tech experts!

Register [here](#).

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



STAY IN TOUCH WITH US

It is hard to believe that we are already more than halfway through the year! Much has happened since the last newsletter, and we are excited to share with you all the excitement of the Riga congress in the weeks to come. Make sure that you have subscribed to our newsletter, and that you are on our social media pages. Early Bird Registration for Montessori Europe and the Latvian Montessori Association will open mid-September.

We also look forward to seeing you at our upcoming webinars, where we'll keep exploring the themes that matter most to our community.

If you have news, ideas, or initiatives you'd like to share with the Montessori Europe community, we'd be delighted to hear from you. Please get in touch at office@montessori-europe.net.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

The Montessori Europe Team



Our Congress Team hard at work for you in Riga!