

## 50 Years of History

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### Belgium

**Name of organisation:** MATHERA Belgian Specialist Group Manual Therapy

**Year organisations started:**

**1991:** BLMT/BWMT: Belgian Scientific Manual Therapists (alumni University Brussels)

**1991:** BVMT-ABTM: Belgian Association of Manual Therapy (alumni University Ghent)

**2013:** MATHERA.be - Manual Therapy Association Belgium (BVMT/ABTM/BWMT)

**2016:** ABSG Manual Therapy / MATHERA (the Belgian Manual Therapy Association recognized by AXXON, the Belgian parent body of WP)

**Member of IFOMPT since:** 1996

**Key influencers of OMPT in your country:** Many members have contributed to the development and training of OMPT and formation of our representative OMPT group, including: Axel Beernaert; Peter Van Roy; Nicole Timmerman; Nadine Vanhollebeke; Willy Smeets; Bart Vanthillo; Christophe Demoulin; Laurent Pitance; Sebastien Wolfs; Renaud Hage; Kristof De Cock.

**Development over the years:**

We started with many different (sometimes conflicting) groups but evolved to a unified umbrella group in which all official groups are represented.

The Belgian legal framework for recognition of the manual therapist (2015-16) created a solid basis for a constructive cooperation with other healthcare professionals and stakeholders.

**Any major changes or challenges in the last 50 years:**

IFOMPT recognition in 1996 required many courses in manual therapy education to fulfill the international educational standards.

The legal framework to protect the title of MT stimulated the evolution of university based courses as graduates from community based courses were no longer recognized.

**Current status and challenges:**

MATHERA is working to further establish manual therapists as musculoskeletal specialists among other healthcare professionals. Strategies include defining the identity of MATHERA and what we do, conducting a public relations program and continuing to grow our manual therapists and provide high-quality patient-centered care.

**The future of your organisation:**

MATHERA will remain the glue between all recognized Belgian MT groups.

MATHERA will promote MT as a physiotherapy specialty for musculoskeletal dysfunctions in the global health system in Belgium in therapy and prevention (PR-campaign).

MATHERA aims to obtain more representation in important governmental decision making through the parent body AXXON to resolve political matters as direct access, reimbursement.

It is encouraging to see young and engaged colleagues contributing to several work and advisory groups within the board of MATHERA. This means that defending the interests and rights of all Belgian manual therapists is ensured for the future.

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