**Who took the initiative to start your organisation? What was the context in which it was started?** \*

At the end of 1980-s when the iron curtain of soviet isolationism began to crumble, a copy of A. Beck’s *Cognitive therapy and emotional disorders* obtained by Estonian Central Medical Library in 1987 was discovered by some open-minded psychologists. Though the principles of behaviourism and behaviour analysis were known and used in clinical practice already, a cognitive approach was definitely new at that time.

In search for appropriate therapeutic model for Estonia at this confusing time under flooding of ideas and activities from the best to the worst from all corners of the world, a group of psychologists formed who preferred cognitive approach. The group, led by graduate student and lecturer of the University of Tartu - Tõnis Arro and Maie Kreegipuu, inclined to cognitive thinking due to strong school of cognitive psychology in the Department of Psychology. Since beginning the group decided to rely on psychological and medical research, to search contact with the best of theory and practice in other countries and to get good training. After putting together all texts which could be obtained in Estonia and studying them, the group organised an open lecture day in Jämejala Psychiatric Hospital in May 1989. As it raised much interest within psychologists and psychiatrists, the group applied to Health Ministry for financial and organisational support to organise teaching of CBT and began regular lectures and seminars. The task could not be done without help from outside. In 1989 Tõnis Arro participated in EABT Congress in Vienna and arrived with the minimum training standards, and some promises from colleagues. In a few months, in April 1990 Paul Emmelkamp, the president of EABCT at that time, visited Estonia, giving a lecture in Tallinn Psychiatric Hospital and a workshop on *Exposure in vivo* in Tartu University. Paul had an illuminative and deep influence on everybody present, with the methods new to us, with the teaching - very effective, structured and active, with his ability to survive in postsoviet environment. Not independent yet, but very much still the part of the system then, Estonia was not easily cognizable place. Many foreigners visiting Estonia then had been rather confused by our everyday system, which did not function in the way normal societies do. We had been used to the helplessness of our guests☺ Then Paul Emmelkamp came, and surprised us by managing many things, including to manage a *Moskvich* (a thing having almost all the parts of car, as he commented), and *roubles* (soviet money which could buy almost nothing, because the shops were empty, but he found his way). His ability not to get lost in soviet streets demonstrated his ability to live up to his own teaching in workshop: “Behaviour therapy is not talking a talk, but walking a walk.”

After a couple of months we had an opportunity to meet another attractive personality and to learn another method: Matti Aalto from Finnish Society of Learning Therapy conducted a workshop on RET. With his contagious vitality he managed us to work on our own problems, a hard task for introverted shy Estonians, but he did it! Hard to believe, but by the end of second day we even sang: “Perfect, perfect, perfect all the time...” During this initial cycle of training in 1989-92 also Nils Holmberg, Paul Salkovskis, Thomas Dowd, Biza Kroese and Julie Reed gave us lectures and workshops. We got lot of support from several associations, especially British, Finnish and Dutch organisations of CBT: workshops, supervision, not to mention books and articles. The culmination of the first period was getting out of print the translation into Estonian of the book *Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Psychiatric Problems* by Hawton, Salkovskis, Kirk and Clark in 1993, which became a standard volume for use amongst cognitive behaviour therapists in Estonia. The influence of the Oxford group put a clear mark to the directions of CBT in Estonia.

From this adventure of a small group of enthusiasts CBT has grown to an influential school of thinking and therapy in Estonian health care with its association, training programs, and research.

**What is a moment, a happening or an achievement in your organisation's history that you are proud of?** \*

The Estonian Association of Cognitive and Behaviour Therapy (EACBT) was founded in 1990and its membership application to the European Association of Behaviour Therapy was accepted within the same year. We are proud that since it`s beginning we have had high training standards and CBT training is highly valued.

**What role would you say that your organisation is currently playing in the context of your culture and country?** \*

Our association has played a huge role in working out the qualification standards and professional regulations for the clinical psychologists-psychotherapists who`s services are covered by national health insurance. Thus, it means that CBT as a treatment is available in many corners of Estonia. We are valued partners for different governmental and private organizations, providing expert knowledge in the area of mental health services. Not to speak of personal influence, as several members of the initiative group have achieved influential positions in Estonian medical and education system.

**What do you see for your organisation in the future? What do you hope to achieve or what would you like to work towards?** \*

Main area in which CBT is currently applied is adult mental health. Although there are some CBT therapists specialised in the treatment of children, and the special interest group was formed in 2002, we see the continuing need and demand for CBT training among child psychologists, and develop our training programs accordingly.

Also we hope to train more supervisors, and increase the opportunity for CBT treatment for children and Russian speaking population.

**Finally: What's your organisation's biggest Vasa (blunder), and what did you learn from it?**

**Built in 1628 on the order of King Gustav Adolf, this expensive and richly decorated ship only sailed for a few minutes before sinking due to its dangerously unstable build.**

The biggest Vasa was probably the first attempt to start the training by our own trainers. The trainers were very enthusiastic about CBT and all the doctors and psychologists who wanted the CBT training were very welcome to the group. Unfortunately only half of the trainees of that group finished the training. What did we learn from it? The selection of the trainees is crucial for successful training. Since then we have a 95-100% completion rate.