

On behalf of the world movement, the German Bund took it upon itself to try to protect the trademark "Waldorf" extensively in the world (in addition to SWSF in the UK and AWSNA in the US, where they are in the process of agreeing on how to best cooperate in writing). It is a tedious and expensive process and seen as a service to the worldwide movement.

The German Bund holds it for "Waldorf" and "Rudolf Steiner" in category 41 (and also some other categories). 41 concerns the rendering of educational services and is the relevant category for the running of schools. A body always holds the trademark to something in relation to some FIELD. So the trademark the Bund holds for Steiner and Waldorf IN EDUCATION did not apply to toys. So they registered another trademark for toys in some countries. In the case of Europe, everything is registered EU-wide, so certainly also in Lithuania.

When a body holds a trademark, they can stop others from using the words for which they hold the trademark - also individually - in any branding. They cannot stop you from saying that you work from Waldorf education if it is not in the NAME. And once a school has the right to use the trademark, it can use it in any product it might work with (for example the Steiner School Certificate), as long as the product fits the category. (Of course if it doesn't and there is no trademark in that category, then it can as well).

Now where there are functioning national school associations, these decide when a school is allowed to use the name Steiner or Waldorf. In Germany, there is a set of rules that the regional associations check up "as agent" for the national association.

Internationally, the attempt is underway to separate the body who holds the trademarks worldwide from the Bund. Others could write more about that. That has been and still is a very slow process, more under the auspices of the International Forum (formerly Hague Circle).

So any school needs to contact its national association first and ask for their criteria for using the name Waldorf in the school name.

In any case, it belongs to the tasks of national associations to make sure that this field is kept in order. If someone just calls themselves Waldorf without asking (that happens a lot around the world, sometimes they just liked the ring of the word and have no real idea about what Waldorf is about), the association should point out that they cannot just do that unilaterally, they need to consult with the national association.

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