The History and Organization of the European Federation of Psychologists’ Associations (EFPA): Reflections on the first 30 years of EFPA

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Abstract

In 1981, the European Federation of Professional Psychologists’ Associations (EFPPA) was formed with thirteen member associations (one per country) and no centralized administrative support. Thirty years later, EFPPA has become EFPA with 35 member associations representing about 300,000 psychologists across Europe. EFPA is now based in offices in the centre of Brussels, the administrative heart of Europe, with a Director and staff who support the work of the EFPA Executive Council and the various Standing Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups. In this article, the development of EFPA and the challenges faced, and mostly overcome, is outlined.

Key reference terms: EFPA; EFPPA; European PsychologyFrom the perspective of 2011 with free movement for most Europeans across Greater Europe and the era of always-on internet access, it is easy to forget how different was Europe – and the world – in 1981. This was the year that the IBM Personal Computer was introduced, there were assassination attempts on President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II and a disease - later termed AIDS – was identified. The Cold War, with an ‘iron curtain’ splitting Europe, was still ongoing and in 1981 the European Communities (later to become the European Union) welcomed as its tenth member Greece, which had emerged in the 1970s from dictatorship (like Spain and Portugal). But 1981 also marked the formation of the European Federation of Professional Psychologists’ Associations (EFPPA).

Hans Weltzer (1992) notes that although EFPPA was officially formed in 1981, its conception began in meetings that took place in the 1970s. In particular, he highlights an invitation in January 1974 for the Danish Psychological Association to attend the conference of the 29th Congress of the Deutschen Gesellschaft für Psychologie (German Society for Psychology) in Salzburg later that year in order to discuss a number of issues with the intention to see whether neighboring countries could help each other, but not to form a group of western psychological associations. The issues included: exchanging information and planning common action towards legislation for psychologists; opportunities for exchange of professional psychologists; exchanging observers to keep up-to-date with programs of further education; and maintaining more regular contact with international bodies. Although, the Danish decided not to send a representative to that meeting, those attending (representatives from Germany, Austria and Switzerland) decide to form a working group of European Psychologists Associations. This working group met throughout the late 1970s but in 1975 the President of the Berufsverband Deutscher Psychologen (Professional Association of German Psychologists), Dr Kohlschen, noted that the working group would meet at least once a year to discuss common problems and issues in the education and practice of psychologists, but with no intention of becoming a more permanent organization. However, over time this attitude was to change.

Michael Hockel, then Vice-President of The Association of German Professional Psychologists (BDP - Berufsverband Deutscher Psychologinnen und Psychologen), had helped organize a series of meetings of the Presidents of the Psychologists Associations in Europe: Amsterdam (1978); Düsseldorf (1979); Zurich (1980); culminating in the foundation meeting of EFPPA in Germany. The first General Assembly was held in Heidelberg in 1981 with the following thirteen founder national psychology associations: Austria; Belgium; Denmark; Finland; Iceland; Italy; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Switzerland; United Kingdom; West Germany (although Luxembourg was not present at the actual meeting). Heidelberg was an appropriate choice as Heidelberg University was where Wilhelm Wundt, the father of experimental psychology, studied as a student and first taught as a lecturer eventually writing in 1874 one of the foundational works in psychology *Grundzüge der Physiologischen Psychologie* (Principles of Physiological Psychology).

Michael Hockel became the first President of EFPPA with Halvor Kjølstad from Norway as Vice-President and Anton Stuyling de Lange from the Netherlands as Secretary General and Treasurer. The other three member of the first Executive Council (EC) were Ruth Burckhardt from Switzerland, Frank McPherson from the United Kingdom and Ida Kurcz from Poland. Michael Hockel remembers the first EC with great affection, “it was good luck to have Stuyling de Lange – who died so unexpectedly – and the whole crew was very humorous… we soon had become real friends.” The first EC relied on letters sent through the postal systems of Europe and the telephone for communication, but was able to meet in a variety of different countries. Michael Hockel remembers greatly enjoying hosting a meeting at his practice with a horse and carriage outing to the Hofbräuhaus in Munich.

In February 1982 an important meeting took place in the Amsterdam Sonesta Hotel where draft “Principles of the European Federation of professional associations of psychologists” (Grundsätze der Europäischen Föderation der Berufsverbände von Psychologen) were produced. The five principles were: Psychology is Science (Psychologie ist Wissenschaft); Psychology has responsibility (Psychologie trägt Verantwortung); Psychology is working with fellow human beings (Psychologie ist mitmenschliche Arbeit); Training for psychologists (Die Ausbildung des Psychologen); The psychological profession (Der psychologische Beruf).

Michael Hockel stood down as President at the next General Assembly in Edinburgh in 1982 where Frank McPherson took over the role. At this General Assembly, EFPPA welcomed Liechtenstein and Portugal as new members. Early challenges included agreeing a definition of what is a professional psychologist and preparing for the first EFPPA conference “Postgraduate Training in Psychology” that took place in Vienna 27-29 September 1984, where the next General Assembly also took place.

In 1983, Theo Jonkergouw was appointed to replace Stuyling de Lange in the Dutch professional association of psychologists (NIP – Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen) after Stuyling de Lange had suffered a heart attack; Theo Jonkergouw then agreed to replace him in EFPPA after his second heart attack and untimely death. Theo Jonkergouw worked closely with Frank McPherson, acting as both Secretary General and Treasurer. EFPPA had by now become known all over the world. This proved a mixed blessing as many letters and phone calls were received from psychologists who assumed that EFPPA was as well-resourced as the American Psychological Association with extensive offices containing a large number of administrative staff. The reality was quite different with no offices, no employees and little support for any members of the EC beyond what was available from their national association. In addition, all the work done by EC members was in addition to their main employment, meaning that most of it was carried out in evenings and weekends.

At the 1984 General Assembly in Vienna, Sweden became the sixteenth member of EFPPA. Despite the hard work Theo Jonkergouw has some happy memories of his time on the EC, “I remember a great night in Rome in 1988 as guests of the Italian psychological association with lots of people on the terrace of a restaurant at the Piazza Navona.” The General Assembly held there saw four new members of EFPPA: France, Greece, Hungary and Spain. Theo Jonkergouw especially enjoyed the General Assembly in Lausanne, 1986, “The benefits of psychology”. Here I met my wife! The greatest benefit I even could imagine.” That year also marked the enlargement of the European Union to include Portugal and Spain.

Throughout the 1980s there were early contacts with the various European bodies, but no great influence. The first “European Congress of Psychology” was organized in 1989 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Following an agreement in 1991 for the Budapest Congress to be organized under the auspices of EFPPA, this became an important and highly visible activity for EFPPA. The European Congress of Psychology is now organized in collaboration with the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) and the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS).

The 1990s marked the start of a period of great change for Europe and EFPPA. The previous year had seen the fall of the Berlin Wall and the beginning of the end of the Cold War and the division of Europe, with Germany reunited the following year. In 1990 at the General Assembly in Luxembourg, Michael Hockel, Frank McPherson and Halvor Kjølstad stood down from the EC after lengthy periods of distinguished service. The new EC had Ype Poortinga from the Netherlands as President with Ruth Burckhardt remaining as Vice-President. Birgit Hansson from Sweden took over as Secretary General and Armand Wagner from Luxembourg remained Treasurer. The other members of the EC were Angela Schorr from Germany, Jerzy Mellibruda from Poland and Ingrid Lunt from the United Kingdom. At this 1990 General Assembly, the Optimal Standards for the Education and Training of Psychologists were accepted, which greatly enhanced EFPPA’s leadership role in European psychology. Ype Poortinga noted that “EU regulations, especially those on free movement of professionals across borders were of major concern, but despite various efforts (e.g. through SEPLIS - Secrétariat Européen des Professions Libérales later CEPLIS) not much progress was made in placing EFPPA on the map in ‘Brussels’.”

Ype Poortinga stood for the position of President due to his “previous experience with the administration of international and national associations of psychology and liked the challenge of placing European psychology ‘on the map’”. He saw the greatest challenge as “having more psychologists from various countries represented by the national member in EFPPA and to include especially the ‘scientists’ and their (European) interests.”

Birgit Hansson notes that “The President and the Secretary General were both new in their positions and that was a challenge. We arranged General Assemblies every year, 1991, 1992 and 1993 to shift the two-year period. The European Congresses had to be settled, both concerning organizing, content and regional location.” The 1990s were a period of increasing work with a unified EC with Birgit Hansson noting that “I remember my EFPPA and EFPA years with great joy and thankfulness - as I also remember the hard work!” Ingrid Lunt similarly notes that “… It is difficult to single out anyone for comment, but I was very glad that the two Secretary General colleagues with whom I worked (Birgit Hansson and Carola Brücher-Albers) had a great sense of humour and a good perspective on EFPPA as an organization.”

The EC had been making use of fax communication, but the 1990s marked the dramatic increase in use of email as the dominant form of communication supplemented by use of landline telephones. It was tradition that the secretariat of EFPPA moved with the change of the Secretary General as, for example, Sverre Nielsen and Jan Hoyersten from Norway, Örjan Salling from Sweden as head of office can testify. In 1991, it was decided to hold the General Assembly immediately following the Second European Congress of Psychology in Budapest in July 1991, and subsequently the EFPPA General Assembly has always met in conjunction with the biennial European Congress of Psychology, which is organized under the auspices of EFPPA (Lunt, 1996). EFPPA had no real role in the organization of the European Congress in Budapest, but the Finnish organizers allowed EFPPA a role in their 1993 Congress in Tampere. Subsequent Congresses have been organized under the auspices of EFPPA. Ingrid Lunt observes that “This was part of our attempt to develop EFPPA as an organization that was concerned with both practitioner and scientist psychologists.”

Ype Poortinga notes that “There are several people who have worked hard for EFPPA. However, the contributions of Professor Ingrid Lunt stand out and this deserves to be mentioned in any history of EFPA. Without her work as an EC member, two-times President, and chair and main organizer of the EuroPsy project, EFPPA would not be where it is today.”

Ingrid Lunt notes that “At the time (1990), BPS [British Psychological Society] did not have much link with EFPPA, and even though the EFPPA President was British, there was very little contact with EFPPA. So, a small number of us on the BPS Professional Affairs Board decided that BPS should get involved in EFPPA and in order to do this it was agreed to nominate one of our members to the EC. The Board asked me if I would be willing to be nominated, in part because I speak a few European languages, and in part because I had expressed some interest in broadening the European profile and activity of BPS. So, for the first time ever BPS sent their full complement of five delegates to the EFPPA GA and decided to nominate someone (me) for election to EC.”

There were a number of challenges in the 1990s. Ingrid Lunt notes “Most of my time on the EC I was editor of ‘News from EFPPA’, and it was a challenge to get anyone to submit copy for the Newsletter; which meant that I often ended up writing most of it myself. The Newsletter was greatly appreciated which was why I continued, yet somehow it was difficult to get anyone to contribute news.” The newsletter was eventually incorporated within this journal. A bigger issue was tension within EFPPA as Ingrid Lunt notes “The challenge of the ‘two Ps’ was a major one for my Presidency and I worked hard on this: some of the EFPPA organisations were very strongly professionally (Practitioner) focussed and directed to the interests of the members (some were trade unions), while others were scientifically focused and directed to the interests of ‘science’. This tension meant that it was sometimes challenging to set the vision and the priorities.” *Poortinga* and *Lunt* discuss this in greater detail elsewhere in this issue.

Although the EC were using email, the organization of work was problematic as Ingrid Lunt notes “Believe it or not, even up to 1999, the EC worked mainly through paper documents, though of course we all had computers, mainly used for word-processing. There was no Brussels office then … so the EC meetings were arranged in rotation around Europe. This meant that sometimes we went to places where the EC member was based, sometimes to places where the next Congress was to be held, sometimes to places where there was a situation with the MA that could be supported or resolved by having an EC meeting there. Of course, having no base for EFPPA, meant that all the papers were dispersed either in my office or in the office of the Secretary General.”

Manuel Berdullas from Spain joined the EC in 1992 at the General Assembly in Brussels where Estonia was welcomed into the EFPPA family. He joined the EC as he “always believed that making EFPPA strong and effective would help to enhance psychology as a science and a profession and that being part of the EC would give me the opportunity to work towards this main target.” Manuel Berdullas greatly enjoyed his time on the EC saying that “Most of the colleagues with whom I spent long hours were fantastic humans. We shared experiences and dreams. We learned from each other and we tried to spread among Member Associations and psychologists the importance of having a European Psychology.”

In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty was signed, establishing the European Union, which replaced the European Communities the following year. In the 1990s the EC were more active in their attempts to work with European institutions as Ingrid Lunt observes “We did try to get involved with European bodies, but this was quite difficult given the time constraints and the lack of a base or presence in Brussels. We very rarely had meetings in Brussels, or any reason to go to Brussels, though this was mainly achieved through our involvement with CEPLIS.” However, a European Meta-Code of Ethics produced by the EFPPA Standing Committee on Ethics was accepted in 1995 (and was ultimately the basis for *Ethics for European Psychologists* by Lindsay *et al.,* 2008). The General Assembly in 1993 saw four new members of EFPPA: Ireland, Malta, Slovenia and Turkey.

In 1995, Wim Manniën from The Netherlands took over as Treasurer at the General Assembly in Athens, where Cyprus became an EFPPA member. Following his untimely death in 2007, Tikkanen (2008) observed that “Wim’s most enduring achievement for EFPA was perhaps his negotiating the purchase of the Brussels Head Office, together with the Belgian Federation of Psychologists. The office, which has already greatly increased in value, has enabled EFPA to engage in far more activities and has generally raised the profile of the organization.” In 1997, Carola Brücher-Albers was elected Secretary General at the General Assembly in Dublin where Croatia and Slovakia became EFPA members. By the end of the second decade of EFPPA’s existence, its focus began to change from collaboration among Member Associations to joint representation and action at the European level. EFPA decided to open a Head Office in Brussels (1997) and to appoint a Director (1998). Ingrid Lunt observes “I think that having the office in Brussels, and therefore a base there (a “Home” for EFPA) and of course wonderful Sabine Steyaert as Director, has made the most enormous difference to the functioning both of the EFPA EC and of EFPA itself.” Indeed, Ingrid Lunt considers the greatest achievement of her time in EFPA, “… has to be the acquisition of the office in Brussels. This has made a huge difference to the organization, functioning and even status of EFPA.” However, she goes on to add “But we also worked hard to bring together the professional practitioner and more scientific ‘arms’ of EFPA and the discipline. One manifestation of this was EFPPA’s increasing involvement in the new journal the European Psychologist.” Manuel Berdullas also highlights that “establishing an office in Brussels could be considered the greatest [achievement], but I believe that working towards the idea of creating a European Certificate on Psychology and on Psychotherapy should not be forgotten.” Carola Brücher-Albers has similar views “It is always hard to focus on ONE achievement! Let me mention two: first, the set-up of the Head Office in Brussels including the employment of permanent staff members and the decision to play a counterpart to the Bologna process as far as politicians try to reduce the scope of a basic education in psychology to three or less academic years. The second greatest achievement has been the decision about the development of the EFPA EuroPsy certificate and sub-certificates.”

In 1998 a group of leading psychologists, linked to EFPPA, started the EuroPsy project, aiming to develop standards for the education and professional qualifications of psychologists in Europe. Ingrid Lunt was the coordinator of two projects funded by the EU under its Leonardo da Vinci program to develop a common European qualification in psychology. After almost a decade of preparatory work, EuroPsy is currently being implemented. Elsewhere in this issue *Lunt* provides an overview of what ultimately became the EuroPsy.

Replacing Ingrid Lunt as President in 1999 at the General Assembly in Rome was Tuomo Tikkanen from Finland. At the same meeting the Czech Republic and Lithuania joined EFPPA. Tuomo Tikkanen saw one of the greatest challenges of his term as “keeping science and profession together and changing EFPPA’s name to EFPA to reflect the fact that EFPA represents both science and profession.” In this, he was successful with the Federation changing its name, dropping its ‘first P’, at the General Assembly in London 2001. This change indicated the Federation’s intention to represent both the science and profession of psychology in Europe. EFPA also established a Standing Committee for Scientific Affairs, and shortly thereafter, adopted this journal ‘The European Psychologist’ as its official organ. At this meeting, Latvia became the first country to join EFPA. Katharina Althaus was also elected to the EC in 1999, having been the first Convener of the Task Force (later to become the Standing Committee) for Psychotherapy since 1993. During her term she was the EC expert on psychotherapy and invested a great deal of time in a thorough review of the statutes – and modified statutes were approved at the General Assembly Granada in 2005. Katharina Althaus was also the first news editor of the *European Psychologist* when it became the ‘official organ of EFPA’.

In 2001, Richard Freeman from the United Kingdom took over as Secretary General and Pierangelo Sardi joined the EC. Pierangelo Sardi joined the EC because “My feeling in the eighties was that lobby work was not sufficiently considered by Italian psychologists, in comparison with other professions and their representatives. During the nineties I transferred the same feeling onto the European situation: this was my motivation to candidate.” He observes that “Even more than medical doctors (active against our positions only once, when a new directive on railway drivers tried to exclude them from using psychological tools for selection), it has been a major risk the lobby-work of the European Association of Psychotherapy, claiming the independence of psychotherapy from any university training in psychology or medicine. They were able to convince the EU Parliament in its first reading of the Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications, and were also active in the Council of Europe, claiming the right to free access of any patient to any psychotherapist.” The work of the EFPA Standing Committee on Psychotherapy is discussed further elsewhere in this issue by *Lane* and *Althaus*.

Pierangelo Sardi also appreciated the EC noting how he recalls “with a deep nostalgia that collaboration, on both sides: I learned a lot from them, especially about the accreditation of competences through EuroPsy, and they were able to learn the importance of my humble lobby-work” and “mentioning the pleasure and the fruitfulness of the collaboration with the administrative staff, especially with Sabine [Steyaert], a basic asset for EFPA’s network and organization.” Communication within the EC was very effective as Pierangelo Sardi observes, “Instead of relying only on meetings (as too many other Executive bodies do, including for instance that of CEPLIS, the European Council of Liberal Professions) the members of the EFPA EC exchanged email with each other nearly every day: we discussed this way in-depth all the questions, having the possibility to contribute only after a proper analysis. It has been a model for me in various other networks.”

The development of the EuroPsy was an important focus of Tuomo Tikkanen’s presidency “[a great challenge was] integrating the EuroPsy project to the reality of developing regulations of the profession of psychologists and making sure that we achieved a unanimous decision on which we could build the EuroPsy certification system and register in the coming years.” However, science was not neglected and the election to the EC of Rainer Silbereisen in 2003 was significant. Rainer Silbereisen was the first Convener of EFPA’s Standing Committee of Scientific Affairs from 2001 - 2003, is the current President of IUPsyS and was until recently President of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development. In 2004, Rainer Silbereisen took over from Kurt Pawlik as Editor-in-Chief of this journal. When Rainer Silbereisen handed over to the current Editor-in-Chief, Alexander Grob, he had built on Kurt Pawlik’s hard work and had overseen a doubling in the number of submissions, an acceptance rate of 30%, an average number of reviews for each submission of 2.4 and achieved – and maintained – an impact factor for the journal above 1 (Silbereisen, 2009). Elsewhere in this Special Issue, *Polišenská* discusses EFPA’s support for science, including reference to *European Psychologist*.

In the 2000s, the change towards greater outward orientation became apparent when EFPA began to formulate common policies and guidelines regarding the education and training of psychologists, professional ethics, and the practice of psychologists throughout Europe. It began to address national governments, the European Commission, and the Council of Europe, on a range of issues related to the psychological profession and discipline. As Tuomo Tikkanen noted “[another challenge was] achieving serious and continuous political contacts with the European Commission, European Parliament, the European Council and the other professional bodies, like EUROCADRES and CEPLIS which were actively influencing the decisions of the European Union and European governments” and “changing EFPA to a more developed level of organisation: from mere exchange of ideas and experiences to really influencing the policies defining the present reality and the future of the education and training of psychologists in Europe”. As a result, EFPA was granted a consultative and participatory status as an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) in relation to the Council of Europe in 2003 (Tikkanen, 2007). Tuomo Tikkanen also notes in particular the achievement “when the European Council in our 2003 Strasbourg meeting took EFPA as a serious partner in its work to start building a network of disaster and crisis psychologists in Europe”. Ultimately, EFPA was a partner in the “Psychological Assistance for the Victims of Terrorism” project, which was led by Liz Campbell and the BPS. The work of the Standing Committee on Disaster and Crisis Psychology is discussed elsewhere in this issue by *Karanci*, *Yule* and *Saari*.

To support its lobbying work EFPA gathered data about the state of the profession and its legal regulations, which were published in a brochure and journal articles in the European Psychologist and elsewhere. The establishment of the European Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications (36/2005/EC) facilitated the development of the EuroPsy and its use as a tool for enhancing the quality and mobility of psychologists in Europe. Tuomo Tikkanen notes that as a result the EC produced “numerous letters and sent information to several European governments concerning the need of the national education and training level of psychologists to be in line with the EuroPsy standard which EFPA had created.” In addition, members of the EC made personal visits to member countries to support their negotiations with their national governments. This became particularly important following the 2004 enlargement of the European Union from 15 members to 25.

Tuomo Tikkanen notes that his Executive Councils “were extremely resourceful persons - and also delightfully different. In all the four Executive Councils during my terms everybody wanted to do their share of the work. That is not so usual in Executive Councils - my special thanks to all the EC members during 1999-2007… We also had a good blend of hard work and social togetherness. Often we came to Brussels in the evening before the actual meeting day or days. We had a social dinner and got to know each other quite well also personally - and some of the EC members also had a nice habit of ‘trying to look for the worst bar in Brussels’ after the dinner. Naturally, the really worst bar was never found....” Again, he adds praise for the EFPA Director, “Sabine Steyaert has been wonderful both in terms of her work and her person. Frankly, without her commitment and work EFPA would not be even close to where it is today.”

In 2005 at the General Assembly in Granada, Tuomo Tikkanen formally received the final EuroPsy document from EuroPsy group leader and former EFPA President Ingrid Lunt enabling EFPA to truly begin work with the Member Associations to roll out the EuroPsy in all European countries. In addition, San Marino joined the EFPA family.

In 2007 at the General Assembly in Prague, Tuomo Tikkanen stood down and now says “EFPA has meant a unique life experience for me, but also a huge amount of personal commitment and hard work. Therefore, at the moment I am extremely satisfied that I can follow EFPA’s development in an advisory position as a Member of the Presidents Council. It is rewarding to know what and how things should be done, but have someone else take their turn in doing the biggest lot of the practical work” Replacing him as President was Roal Ulrichsen from Denmark. Also, at this General Assembly, Bulgaria and Serbia became EFPA members.

Although EFPA and the Belgian Federation of Psychology had successfully shared office space in Brussels, it became clear that more space was required. Consequently, in 2009 EFPA purchased approximately 150m2 of new offices in the same building. Following some renovation works the offices were officially inaugurated with a reception in April 2011 prior to the Presidents’ Council meeting. The offices will allow Standing Committees, Task Forces etc. to meet simultaneously and will allow EFPA to offer meeting and administrative services in Brussels to its affiliate member organizations, which sometimes have no office of their own. In this way the EFPA Head office will become the Centre for European Psychologists.

In 2009 at the General Assembly in Oslo, Roal Ulrichsen stood down and Robert Roe took over the Presidency. This General Assembly saw the largest country in the Council of Europe, Russia, become a member. Robert Roe sees the greatest challenges for EFPA as “(1) to overcome psychology’s tendency to diversify and divide itself, which obliterates common interests, (2) to turn the focus from psychology itself to the outside world, and (3) to bring the organization in line with the demands of today. I think that we only have a future if we are able to present ourselves as a single party, speaking with one voice and acting coherently, if we accept that we have a role to play at the European stage among the other professions, and if we can create a more resourceful and effective organization. At a more practical level there is, of course, the implementation of EuroPsy and the development of an effective lobbying structure. These are major challenges indeed, which will require more than one term.”

The General Assembly in Oslo also saw the first presentation of the EFPA Presidential Award to Ingrid Lunt by Roal Ulrichsen (see photograph) who said

*This award has been created to recognise outstanding service to psychology and to EFPA itself. The recipient of this award has devoted much of her career to forging links between psychologists from numerous countries across Europe and across the world. She served as President of EFPA for two terms - and an extra half term by popular acclaim. She has selflessly worked for over ten years leading the development of a European standard for psychology that in this Congress we will see come into formal existence as the EuroPsy: the European Certificate in Psychology. The EuroPsy will become the standard for psychology throughout Europe protecting consumers, protecting psychology and raising standards in countries where psychology is less well-established.*



Richard Freeman stood down in 2009 as Secretary General and was replaced by a colleague from the United Kingdom, Liz Campbell, who had been an active member of the Presidents Council and a former BPS President. However, as Robert Roe notes, “I sadly recollect the meeting with Liz Campbell who had been elected as Secretary General in July 2009 but could join only in October as she was fighting cancer. While being seriously ill, Liz took on her responsibilities and we began making plans for the time to come. That time was minimal; she died within a few months in April 2010.” (See Brown, 2010 for an obituary). Richard Freeman observes “Liz was completely committed to EFPA and had worked tirelessly to ensure that European matters were high on the agenda of the British Psychological Society. She was also a leading voice in the Presidents’ Council Meetings and was generous with her time and brought an infectious enthusiasm to all her activities. She would have been an excellent Secretary General and will be greatly missed both personally and professionally.” Consequently, the EC approached Robertas Povilaitis, former president of the Lithuanian Psychological Association, who in February 2010 agreed to take over the job of Secretary General until the General Assembly in 2011.

The current EC works in ways that are very different from the first. Robert Roe observes that “We have about five meetings a year, and communicate otherwise by email and by means of various electronic “forums”. To prevent overload we do not share all email messages to and from the EC or the Head Office, but are selective in what we communicate to whom. The rule is that we respond within 48 hours to messages asking for opinions or decisions. This works pretty well.” After just over a year in office Robert Roe shares the commonly-held view of the EFPA Director “Sabine is great to work with. She believes in EFPA, sees opportunities and helps realizing them. She works very hard and is very effective”, but notes the challenges ahead. “There are limits to what she and her assistants can do. We definitely need a larger staff to perform even the most essential tasks.”

The current EC has had even greater engagement with European bodies. Robert Roe observes that “We have spent considerable time on meetings with the European Commission, and on participation in EU activities. We have issued a number of position statements, addressed to Europe and Member states in issues on which psychology has an informed view. Exemplary are the position statements on health, on the position of psychologists in the educational system, and on age-based screening of older drivers. We have also made some interventions towards national governments (e.g. Austria, Spain, and Lithuania) in support of our Member Associations. The present EC sees all this as very important: we need to be present and make sure we are heard at the political level, in Europe and nationally.”

Over the thirty years of its existence, EFPA has steadily grown from 13 to 35 members (Figure 1). There have been a large number of people serving on the EC (Table 1) as well as hundreds who have served on Standing Committees, Task Forces and Working Groups. Psychology as science and praxis are surely indebted to all the people who have given up their time so selflessly.

But, what of the future? Ingrid Lunt notes

*EuroPsy has been accepted enthusiastically across European countries, and has also been welcomed in wider international fora. This means that we may be able to work towards a more international standard, having achieved this already at European level. But this success creates challenges too. One of these challenges is: who will do the work? And where do we find the resources to move forward in the way that we would like to, and that EuroPsy needs and deserves? EFPA has grown enormously as an organization over its first 30 years, but it needs to grow even more, particularly in terms of our staff. Sabine Steyaert, our wonderful Director, already undertakes work of several people, but we need more staff. For this we need more funds, and for this we need to market EuroPsy as a desirable investment. A related set of opportunities is the opportunity to share good practice, to influence university education and the quality of professional practice, and to improve the standard of psychology in Europe. This is a strategic matter, and also a matter of resources. The European Congress of Psychology provides opportunities and challenges, and we know that even in this digital age, nothing can replace the face-to-face interactions, debates and discussions which are made possible by such events.*

*EFPA has come a long way and is now a significant body both in Europe and in the wider international psychology community. I believe that it has great potential for the future. The success and strength of EFPA lies in its Member Associations and the ways that they work together and share the wider vision, and also in the commitment and efforts of its leadership and its EC working together with its growing office and staff.*

Tuomo Tikkanen says

*EFPA will continue its growth. It now has 35 Member Associations with about 300,000 psychologists as members. Measured in terms of membership of individual psychologists, it is the world’s biggest psychological association. The number of psychologists is still growing and there are still countries that are not members in Europe. I can visualise a strong federation of 45 countries, with half a million of psychologists, having a very influential role both in Europe and globally.*

Finally, Robert Roe observes that

*The challenges I mentioned earlier will keep us busy for decades, I believe. There are opportunities that will help us. First of all, there is the “European process” as manifested in the saccadic development of the European Union. As the EU moves on the emphasis will change from the economic domain, which has been dominant since the 1950’s, to the social domain. And this is where psychology, if well organized, can make important contributions, ranging from basic research to advice on policy development and coordinated professional work. Second, there is the “need for psychology”. There are so many important issues in society that could be better understood and resolved with the help of psychologists, that policy makers and the public will only welcome our work, if we just come forward, present ourselves, and offer our services.*

*Psychology is a young science and profession. Compared to for example medical doctors and architects, who have been known for thousands of years, we have only been around for about one century. In this short time we have achieved a lot. In my view we should keep the momentum and move forward and make psychology – as a united science, field of teaching and profession – better known and more accessible for society. In Europe, EFPA can be a great help in this.*

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Table 1. Membership of the Executive Council (EC).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | President | Vice-President | Secretary General | Treasurer | EC Members |
| 1981 | Michael Hockel (GER) | Halvor Kjølstad (NOR) | Antonius Stuyling de Lange (NL) | Antonius Stuyling de Lange (NL) | Ruth Burckhardt (SWI)Frank McPherson (UK)Ida Kurcz (POL) |
| 1982 | Frank McPherson (UK) | Ida Kurcz (POL) | Antonius Stuyling de Lange (NL) | Antonius Stuyling de Lange (NL) | Ruth Burckhardt (SWI)Halvor Kjølstad (NOR)Michael Hockel (GER) |
| 1984 | Frank McPherson (UK) | Ruth Burckhardt (SWI) | Theo Jonkergouw (NL) | Theo Jonkergouw (NL) | Halvor Kjølstad (NOR)Angela Schorr (GER)W. Daniecki (POL) |
| 1986 | Frank McPherson (UK) | Ruth Burckhardt (SWI) | Theo Jonkergouw (NL) | Theo Jonkergouw (NL) | Halvor Kjølstad (NOR)Angela Schorr (GER)W. Daniecki (POL) |
| 1988 | Frank McPherson (UK) | Ruth Burckhardt (SWI) | Halvor Kjølstad (NOR) | Armand Wagner (LUX) | Angela Schorr (GER)Jerzy Mellibruda (POL) |
| 1990 | Ype Poortinga (NL) | Ruth Burckhardt (SWI) | Birgit Hansson (SWE) | Armand Wagner (LUX) | Angela Schorr (GER)Jerzy Mellibruda (POL)Ingrid Lunt (UK) |
| 1991 | Ype Poortinga (NL) | Ruth Burckhardt (SWI) | Birgit Hansson (SWE) | Armand Wagner (LUX) | Angela Schorr (GER)Jerzy Mellibruda (POL)Ingrid Lunt (UK) |
| 1992 | Ype Poortinga (NL) | Sec. Gen & Treasurer | Birgit Hansson (SWE) | Birgit Hansson (SWE) | Ingrid Lunt (UK)Manuel Berdullas (SP)Hans Weltzer (DK)Ernst Hermann (SWI) |
| 1993 | Ingrid Lunt (UK) | " | Birgit Hansson (SWE) | Lothar Hellfritsch (GER) | Hans Weltzer (DK)Manuel Berdullas (SP)Ernst Hermann (SWI)Patrick Cohen FR) |
| 1995 | Ingrid Lunt (UK) | " | Birgit Hansson (SWE) | Wim Manniën (NL) | Manuel Berdullas (SP)Ernst Hermann (SWI)Patrick Cohen FR)Salli Saari (FIN) |
| 1997 | Ingrid Lunt (UK) | " | Carola Brücher-Albers (GER) | Wim Manniën (NL) | Manuel Berdullas (SP)Ernst Hermann (SWI)Patrick Cohen FR)Salli Saari (FIN) |
| 1999 | Tuomo Tikkanen (FIN) | " | Carola Brücher-Albers (GER) | Wim Manniën (NL) | Patrick Cohen FR)Katharina Althaus (SWI)Carlos Rodriguez (SP)Stefan Jern (SWE) |
| 2001 | Tuomo Tikkanen (FIN) | " | Richard Freeman (UK) | Wim Manniën (NL) | Katharina Althaus (SWI)Carlos Rodriguez (SP)Stefan Jern (SWE)Pierangelo Sardi (I) |
| 2003 | Tuomo Tikkanen (FIN) | " | Richard Freeman (UK) | An-Magritt Aanonsen (NOR) | Katharina Althaus (SWI)Johanne Bratbo (DK)Rainer Silbereisen (GER)Pierangelo Sardi (I) |
| 2005 | Tuomo Tikkanen (FIN) | " | Richard Freeman (UK) | An-Magritt Aanonsen (NOR) | Katharina Althaus (SWI)Johanne Bratbo (DK)Rainer Silbereisen (GER)Pierangelo Sardi (I) |
| 2007 | Roal Ulrichsen (DK) | " | Richard Freeman (UK) | An-Magritt Aanonsen (NOR) | Hrvoje Gligora (CRO)Veronika Polišenská (CZE)Roger Lecuyer (F)Pierangelo Sardi (I) |
| 2009 | Robert Roe (NL) | " | Liz Campbell (UK)/Robertas Povilaitis (LITH) | An-Magritt Aanonsen (NOR) | Hrvoje Gligora (CRO)Bernard Caruana (MAL)Roger Lecuyer (F)Veronika Polišenská (CZE) |

Figure 1. Number of EFPA Member Associations by Year.