

Report from the EACLPP Board

Nuremberg, April 15, 2011

Dear members of the EACLPP,

The EACLPP Board wants to inform you about some important developments concerning our association and the field of C-L psychiatry and Psychosomatic Medicine. The EACLPP Board is in thorough discussion with the group of colleagues who organise the Conference on Psychosomatic Research (ECPR) in order to unify the two groups and to build a new unified European organisation.

Since 2000, EACLPP and the ECPR group organised a common scientific conference every second year. In 2004, the informal group of colleagues organising the ECPR formed the so-called European Network of Psychosomatic Medicine (ENPM). You can find more information and the names of national representatives of this Network on the ENPM homepage (www.enpm.org). In 2010 the ENPM decided to found a formal European association and to organise a first general assembly in January 2011 in Warzaw. Gerhard Schüssler was elected speaker of the ENPM.

At the Innsbruck conference Albert Leentjens who was EACLPP president at that time and me (being president elect) approached Gerhard Schüssler to discuss possible steps to create a common organisation in the field of C-L psychiatry and Psychosomatic Medicine instead of two separate associations. Gerhard Schüssler was very interested in this idea. We decided that two leading members of each organisation should meet in November 2010 to discuss this topic in more detail.

In November 2010, Gerhard Schüssler and Hans-Christian Deter (ENPM) met with Albert Leentjens and me for two days in Nuremberg. At this meeting, we developed a first draft of a proposal to create a common association. During this meeting a telephone conference of the EACLPP Board was organised to discuss this proposal and the results of this telephone conference were further discussed with the ENPM representatives. The resulting first proposal included the following

- The EACLPP Board and the ENPM representatives will propose to their associations to create a new common European association.
- The new organisation should be interdisciplinary including psychiatrists, psychosomaticists, physicians of other specialties (like internists or gynaecologists etc.), psychologists, nurses and other health care workers active in the field of C-L psychiatry and Psychosomatic Medicine.
- The new association should be based on European right. If possible, it should have individual members and national organisations as members, as well.

- The name of this organisation should be short and simple and describe the field of research, education and health care in which the organisation is active. This field is best described by the term 'Psychosomatic Medicine'. To include the term C-L Psychiatry on the one hand and to keep the title short a sub-title should be added. After thorough discussion the board agreed unanimously on the following name: ***European Association of Psychosomatic Medicine - The European Society for C-L-Psychiatry, Psychosomatic Medicine and Integrated Care.*** The acronym would be simple: ***EAPM.***
- The Journal of Psychosomatic Research should be the official organ of the new association.

In March 2011, the EACLPP Board held a face-to-face meeting in Vienna. Gerhard Schüssler joined this meeting for one day and reported that the ENPM agreed to the main points of this proposal at the Warsaw conference and did not found a new organisation at that occasion as it was planned. At the Vienna meeting the proposal was further discussed in more detail. The following points were added:

- The new association should offer full membership to all professions being active in the field of C-L psychiatry and psychosomatic medicine. However, board members of the new association will need an academic degree as well as track records in the field of psychosomatic medicine/C-L psychiatry.
- Full membership should also be possible to people from non European countries.

The EACLPP will have to discuss this proposal in full detail at the next general assembly at the Budapest conference, July 1,2011. Merging the two European associations into one society is a big step and has – as every major change - advantages and disadvantages.

From the board's point of view the **advantages** are:

- Creating a larger European association including researchers, teachers and clinicians active in the field of psychosomatic medicine and C-L psychiatry;
- broadening the scientific collaboration by creating an interdisciplinary association;
- opening the association for non-European colleagues;
- creating a sound financial basis by enlarging the organisation;
- having a short and simple name and acronym.

The Board also discussed possible **points of attention**:

- The term 'C-L psychiatry' is not in head title. However, to show that one of the main roots and tasks of the new association is C-L psychiatry, this term is included in the sub-title.

- Physicians could fear to become a minority in the association if it is opened for non-physicians active in the field of PM and C-L psychiatry. However, the Board felt that such a fear is not realistic since such a new association will attract physicians to become members.

After considering these concerns, the Board feels that the advantages of the proposal surpass the disadvantages by far.

Next steps:

- This proposal will be thoroughly discussed in the general assembly (GA) at the Budapest conference.
- The Board will propose to the EACLPP members to accept this proposal and to create a new and interdisciplinary European association.
- A speaker of the ENPM, Gerhard Schüssler, will be invited to participate at the beginning of the GA to answer questions.
- If the GA gives a positive vote, the EACLPP Board and representatives of the ENPM would prepare a draft of a constitution of the new association, clarify law issues (European right) and prepare a thorough discussion before the next GA in Aarhus in 2012.
- The new EAPM could be founded at the GA in Aarhus, in 2012.

Wolfgang Söllner
President of the EACLPP