

TUOMO TIKKANEN SAYS GOODBYE TO EFPA, INTERVIEW TO THE PAST PRESIDENT OF EFPA

The EFPA General Assembly in Prague on July 8 2007 elected **Roal Ulrichsen** from Denmark as new President of EFPA. He takes over from **Tuomo Tikkanen**, who has been president of EFPA for the last 8 years. **An-Magritt Aanonsen** from Norway was re-elected as Treasurer and Vice-President of EFPA for a second term 2007-2009. **Hrvoje Gligora** from Croatia, **Veronika Polisanska** from the Czech Republic and **Roger Lecuyer** from France were elected as new Executive Council members for 2007-2011

Infocop Online has taken the opportunity to interview Tuomo Tikkanen and ask him about different aspects of his presidency.

INTERVIEW

***Infocop:* Could you summarize the results of your management the last 8 years as President of EFPA?**

Tuomo Tikkanen: There are quite many important developments which have taken place during the period 1999-2007 - from a political, professional and organizational point of view. I would mention especially the following developments:

- In 2001 EFPPA changed its name to EFPA to reflect the idea of the Federation representing both the science and profession of psychology in Europe. EFPA Statutes were accordingly changed to reflect the same principle. In 2003 EFPA also adopted the journal *European Psychologist* as its official organ
- The number of individual members in the Member Associations has rapidly grown. There are now more than 200.000 members in the 34 Member Associations in 34 European countries. The representation is remarkably high. EFPA Member Associations have estimated that the total number of persons with a psychologist's training in Europe in 2007 is about 320.000.
- Presently there are national laws and legal regulations in 21 EFPA member countries, protecting the title "psychologist" and/or regulating the profession of psychologists. In addition, a similar law has been prepared and is being processed by the governments of 5 other European countries. This means that there is legal regulation (or legislation in process) in 26 out of the 34 EFPA Member countries.
- In 2003 EFPA was granted a consultative and participatory status as an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) in relation to the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe is broader than the European Union and encompasses 46 European countries– from the Atlantic Ocean to the Caspian Sea. The Council of Europe has already adopted important principles for psychological help in disaster and crisis situations – the principles have been prepared by EFPA Standing Committee of Disaster and Crisis Psychology.
- In 2005 the EU Directive 36/2005/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications was accepted. Article 15 of the Directive confirms the right of representative European professional associations - like EFPA - to make proposals to the European Commission on how to promote mobility and quality of psychologists in Europe, e.g. by developing a EuroPsy Professional Card.

- In 2005 in its Granada General Assembly EFPA accepted the standard for the education and training of psychologists in Europe, the EuroPsy. The EuroPsy has been presented to the European Commission and will also be presented to the EU Member States' relevant authorities. The EuroPsy trial is currently being carried out in six EFPA EU Member Associations, namely in Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Spain and the UK. This consultation and trial period will last until the end of 2008.
- In 2005 in Granada and in 2007 in Prague the European Congresses of Psychology were able to regain their strength after a couple of smaller congresses. The Granada Congress gathered about 3.000 psychologists and the one in Praga about 2.500.
- During the period 1999-2007 EFPA has built a permanent Head Office in Brussels. EFPA found the financial means to purchase and own the Office together with the Belgian Federation of Psychologists.
- EFPA has been able to serve its Member Associations in all the matters where the national psychological associations have needed European information or support.

I.: Even though this question may be hard to synthesize, from your point of view, what is the situation of psychology in Europe today?

T.T: Actually, it is not hard to synthesize at all. As you can see from the developments above, the situation of psychology and psychologists is quite good and in dynamic development. The profession of psychologists is growing rapidly, our organizations are getting stronger and gaining more political influence, good legal regulations have been established in the majority of the member countries – and the need for psychology and psychologists in Europe is still growing.

I.: How would you describe the relationship between EFPA and the Spanish Psychological Association in this period?

T.T: The Spanish Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos is one of the cornerstones of EFPA. It is one of EFPA's biggest and most active organizations. During my Presidency the Colegio has shown great devotion and commitment to European cooperation. I thank especially President Francisco Santolaya Ochando and Vice President Manuel Berdullas Temes and colleagues in EFPA Standing Committees like Jose Peiro, Jose-Maria Prieto, Jose Muniz etc. for their valuable work for EFPA and European psychologists. Especially the European Congress in Granada in 2005 - which was completely arranged by COP -was a turning point in the history of the European congresses – a turning point back in the direction of successful congresses which can attract large numbers of European psychologists.

I.: What did you find the first time you were elected President of EFPA and what are you leaving behind you in the Organization?

T.T: The 26-year history of EFPA from 1981-2007 can be characterised as a transformation from an organisation whose main function was to exchange information between its Member Associations towards a European federation that formulates common policies and guidelines on the education, training, professional ethics and practice of psychologists in Europe, and which presents proposals and initiatives to the governments of the European countries, to the European Commission, and to the Council of Europe.

In 1999-2007 we were able to “organise the organisation” – its activities were built upon structured Activity Plans and EFPA started to have political weight also in the wider circles of European policy-making.

In the future, it is evident that EFPA will continue to grow in terms of activity, influence and number of psychologists in the EFPA Member Associations. EFPA aims at representing the science and profession of psychology as broadly as possible in its member countries, and will work towards including all 46 countries that are members of the Council of Europe. It will also endeavour to have a permanent role in advising European bodies in matters where psychological expertise can give an important contribution. Finally, EFPA will seek to ensure that it serves its Member Associations as a source of relevant information and a channel for influencing European policies.

I.: What has your contribution to EFPA been?

T.T: I have had the privilege to be the President of EFPA during a time when dynamic development and strong growth has taken place. I am grateful that I was able to serve EFPA and its Member Associations at a time when such fruitful achievements have been possible.