

Challenges and opportunities for the European psychologist profession

Since its inception in 1981, EFPA (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations) is dedicated to developing psychology, contribute to society, and serve psychologists.

The EuroPsy certificate is well established in 26 countries. It offers a proof of the holder's competency as a practitioner of psychology. It also defines the professional standard of psychologists to aid legislators and educational institutions.

Professional ethics is an integral part of psychological practice. The EFPA Metacode of Ethics is a guide to general professional principals and serves as an important basis for national regulations of professional ethics.

Both the EuroPsy and the Metacode of Ethics have recently been revised and updated to the ever-changing conditions of professional practice.

The practice of psychologists in Europe is one of considerable diversity. Despite the popular stereotype of the psychologist as a provider of individual treatment of mental challenges, psychologists are found in more than 30 well established fields of practice. The scientific basis for these fields is even more diverse and specific. This professional diversity represents both a strength and a limitation in the further development of the profession. A strength, because the diversity lays the ground for valuable solutions to society's challenges. A weakness, because the stereotype of the clinical psychologist hampers recognition of the profession's potential.

The psychologist community consistently experience that governments turn to political scientists, lawyers, technologists, medical doctors and behavioural economists in search for solutions, but often fail to include psychologists in the selection of experts.

The combined psychologist community invests heavily in improving and refining professional competence. EuroPsy is a very important manifestation of that. Much less effort is directed to developing demand for this competence. The 'product' is continuously refined, but the market and marketing efforts are neglected.

EFPA's aim is to nurture the recognition of psychologists as an instrument to counter many of society's unsolved problems. This requires knowledge of how the profession is perceived, and perceived differently, throughout Europe. EFPA strives to possess a reliable overview of our profession, which goes beyond academic education and practical training, to include what the profession actually does.

The presentation will give illustrations to the subject and provide some examples of preliminary results.