



EFPA

WORKING GROUP

NGO

Convenor : LUC SCHELDEMAN

**REPORT to the
GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2005 in GRANADA**

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP : EFPA AS INGO

Convenor : Luc Scheldeman

Report to the General Assembly 2005 in Granada

1. Executive summary :

❖ Period of Task Force

The working group is active since the meeting of the GA in Rome 1999.

After a period of preliminary enquiries in the field the procedure for granting the status of International Non Governmental Organisation (INGO) is introduced in 2003.

The name of EFPA has been added to the list of INGO's enjoying *participatory status with the Council of Europe*, effective from 29 December 2003.

❖ Scope of work

The participatory status within the Council of Europe (CoE) enables an organisation to support more actively participative democracy.

1/ The achievement of the mission of the CoE depends largely on the sensitivity to public opinion and to the driving forces in our society.

2/ The active civil society and its nongovernmental organisations are vital for democracy.

❖ Recommendations

As a INGO EFPA is considered to play an essential counterbalancing role in a pluralist democracy, intensifying the active participation of all citizens in conducting public affairs, and promoting responsible democratic citizenship based on human rights and equality.

EFPA is invited to participate/cooperate/expand on and develop policies, and in such a way EFPA shares responsibility with the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

We have to operate and to become efficient forming a close relationship with the Liaison Committee of the INGOs and in finding ways to contribute to some well-chosen INGO thematic groupings working in the fields familiar with the EFPA standing committees, working groups, and task forces : the social field.

❖ This Working Group reported was accepted as the position of EFPA at the GA of 9 – 10 July in Granada (Spain) .

2. Introduction :

The Documents on Implementation of Committee of Ministers Resolution (93)38 and Resolution (2002)8 the CoE describes EFPA as particularly competent in its field, having also a wide geographical representativity. So EFPA is expected to promote the work of the Council of Europe through its member associations and through its publications.

3. The Council of Europe attributes to EFPA the task “to participate” and to ensure a better visibility for the work of the Council of Europe in the social field.

The participative status intensifies the active participation of all citizens in conducting public affairs. This means that initiatives, ideas, and suggestions emanating from civil society can be considered as her true expression.

The participative status enables EFPA to a better access to all CoE bodies, drawing their attention to the effects of changes in European societies and the problems facing them.

Our status in the CoE can give the work of EFPA a political dimension, especially through its

Involvement with the Liaison Committee and with the Focus Groups.
We also have to ensure a better visibility for the CoEs work in the social field, communicating relevant information to the member associations.

4. Literature

Scheldeman L., *Europe Within Psychologists' Scope*. European Psychologist, Vol.9, No. 3, September 2004, pp.xxx. Hogrefe & Huber Publishers

5. Methodological aspects :

How can EFPA participate ?

As an INGO EFPA is expected to work out fields of competence which are of interest to the Council of Europe.

It would be realistic if EFPA would make a choice of area in which psychologists could contribute to civil society so that their work becomes more visible and consequently better understood.

Someway or another the attendance at some of the meetings, at well chosen events in Strasbourg would enable EFPA to create and maintain relations with the CoE, the Authorities, and more specific with the Secretariat, the Liaison Committee, the Working Groups.

We have to disseminate the information coming from the CoE so that the member associations may give answers related to the field of their competences.
seems limited.

We would like to know how far the three working groups/Task Forces (Traffic, Disaster, Refugees designated by the EC) progressed formulating a useful document for the purpose.

5. Summary data

Pierangelo SARDI and Luc SCHELDEMAN attended to the "Winter session 2004" of the INGOs meeting (26 – 30 January 2004) . L. SCHELDEMAN informed the EC of EFPA in his exhaustive report.

Elements of this report are also mentioned in "Europe Within Psychologists Scope" (see point 4, above)

It is obvious that almost everything in the social field has a psychological aspect.

So it became clear that we have to concentrate in the beginning on a limited number of themes.

The EC decided that we would start working on proposals concerning the psychological aspects of

- 1) Crisis and disaster situations
- 2) Forced migration and refugees
- 3) Traffic safety

It would be logical to cooperate in the future with the CoE-groupings concerned.

To focus on the work of the CoE is one of the tasks of an INGO. So the achievement of the CoE may obtain a better visibility if we should be authorised to inform the member associations. We suggest that the working group may use some space of the EFPA website at that purpose.

The activity and efficacy of the INGO working group is extremely reduced because of the financial limitations. Nevertheless EFPA has to provide more money if it will realise the INGO mission.

Our presence 'on the field' in Strasbourg is becoming a necessity.

The working group demands insistently that the GA would express their options concerning EFPA as an INGO with participative status.

How much energy and finances can we afford in the next years. Do we want a voice in the meetings held by the Liaison Committee and Groupings and so more influence with the Authorities ?

The willingness of the working group is great, time is not the major problem but the money.

6. Proposal for a common EFPA position

The financial investment would give psychologists political opportunity in Europe.

1/ We suggest to introduce the reports on 'crisis, migration and traffic safety' as a first contribution of EFPA as an INGO.

2/ Use of the EFPA website to furnish information, documents and opinions so that the member associations can keep themselves regularly informed of the CoE activities and developments for the part that psychologists are concerned and so far as the field of our competence is involved.

3/ More frequent attendance at the Strassbourg meetings.

4/ Later on a psychologists participation in the groupings and in the Liaison Committee can be taken under consideration.

7. Implications for EFPA Mas

Psychologists will become more visible , listened and understood.

Good working relations with the various CoE bodies (especially with the steering committees, committees of governmental experts, the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Liaison Committee, and the representatives of the thematic groups) will further the most useful effect also in the interest of the member associations.

The Secretary General can consult directly the INGOs on questions of mutual interest.

Memoranda can be addressed to the Secretary General for submission to the Authorities, the Parliament and the other bodies. We have a voice.

The member associations would participate by contributing to some of the INGO thematic groupings working in the fields familiar to the EFPA standing committees, working groups and task forces.

The shortest way to become involved will be through attending and contributing, and by putting foreword the point of view of the member associations and the psychologists.

8. Future tasks of EFPA and conclusion

It is clear that EFPA cannot immediately be involved at all levels and it would be preferable therefore that EFPA could intervene within the limits of his possibilities and with relevant and effective contributions.

Members of the working group :

Luc Scheldeman, convener (Belgium)

Willem Kort, (the Netherlands)

Pierangelo Sardi, representative of the EC (Italy)

An-Magritt Aanonsen, representative of the EC (Norway)