

Report 2013

of the

Task Force Structure

**EFPA General Assembly in Stockholm on
July 13-14, 2013**

Report 2013

Executive summary

The Task Force **Structure** has investigated a broad range of issues to improve the organizational features of EFPA.

Eight area items are debated leading to five specific recommendations for the GA to decide and a request for general acceptance as recommendations or guidelines of the other.

Introduction

The task force Structure was established in December 2011. In its first meeting an overall mandate was formed which read as follows:

The **Task Force Structure** will:

- develop proposals for the revision of the organizational structure of EFPA in accordance with principles outlined in the document „The future of EFPA, vision and strategy“ 2011.
- operate according to the terms of reference for EFPA Task Forces and work together with the Executive Council of EFPA.
- begin its activities by Dec 1 of 2011 and deliver a first Report to the Presidents Council meeting of Nov 2012, and a second and final Report to the General Assembly of Jul 2013
- the Reports contain proposals regarding the organs of EFPA, their tasks and responsibilities, their interrelationships, their mode of operation, and the resources required.

Meetings

- 1) February 3, 2012, Brussels
- 2) September 7, 2012, Brussels
- 3) December 13, 2012, Brussels

Activities

During the first meeting a list of issues to address was made. This included:

1. Critical coordination points

In order for EFPA to operate in a coordinated manner with a focus on the strategic aims, ideas and guidelines should be developed as to how strategic alignment and coordination among various EFPA entities can be attained. A specific need for guidance on the coordination between various EFPA entities was identified.

2. Corresponding membership of committees

It was noted that MAs welcomed the notion of corresponding membership, and that its use may increase as virtual work is becoming more common and better known, and costs savings may be obtained. This raises issues concerning:

- The interaction between active and corresponding members (live vs. virtual)
- The flow of information and decision making
- Agility of committees
- Costs.

3. Implications of new committees for MAs and EFPA

As committees are expected to play a more active role and develop activities within the scope of their mandate, guided by a work plan, there is a need to consider:

- The management of information within and to/from the committees related to meetings, work plans, work in progress, deliverables, formal reports
- Roles, ambitions and targets of the committees
- The demands on the Head Office resulting from this
- The way in which the interface with the Head Office and the EC should be structured
- Relationships with MAs and accountability of committee members.

4. Associate Members

As a growing number of sectoral associations are interested in collaborating with EFPA as Associate Members, their role in EFPA activities and participation in committees should be considered.

5. Funded projects

Externally funded projects are welcome to support the work of EFPA, but preparing applications and managing projects are also demanding resources that EFPA may not provide. EFPA has developed a policy statement on this in 2010. This should be discussed and developed further.

6. Interface between MAs and EFPA

With the increasing activity of EFPA at the European level, and the growing number of facets covered, there is a need to develop the interface between the MAs and EFPA. In the past contacts have been maintained through the Presidents (PCM) and the Network of Secretaries General (NSG). Issues to address are:

- Making sure that there are one or more contact persons
- Roles and responsibilities
- Communication, information sharing, coordination

7. Operational Support Network

Officials from MAs might work together to support the coordinated implementation of certain EFPA activities. An OSN could be seen as the successor of the former NSG, but with a different function. There is a need to discuss:

- Membership (also corresponding members?)
- Roles and responsibilities
- Position within the EFPA structure
- Communication, information sharing, coordination

8. Using expertise and resources of MAs

MAs may advise EFPA on matters in which it has special expertise, and play a role in carrying out activities for and on behalf of EFPA.

There is a need to discuss:

- Providing advice to EFPA
- Outsourcing of activities to MAs: which ones, under which conditions, how?
- Other forms of support by MAs.

9. Presidents Council

Issues relating regarding the composition and functioning of the PCM include:

- PCM as a substitute GA
- The relationship with the EC (dual roles) should also be addressed.

10. Operating principles

Apart from the structural issues, there are a number of operational principles and procedures that deserve attention, including:

- EC Agenda and activity plan
- Activity plans of committees
- Reports of committees
- Cycles and synchronization

Most of these issues were discussed, and if possible resolved, during the meetings and the outcomes were laid down in meeting notes that were available to the EC and in some cases have led to immediate changes. The main results that are of importance for the GA are listed below.

Information & recommendations for GA & Member Associations

The General Assembly is asked to take notice of the following:

1. Interface between MAs and EFPA

– introducing the role of European Contact Person

Given the difference between MAs in size, specialization and resources, it is difficult to come up with an ideal structure of the interface that would satisfy all MAs.

At the side of the MA, there is always the function of president, in more than half of MAs a function of managing director (director, secretary general, office manager, secretary), and sometimes a function of a specialist of European affairs, here called European Contact Person. In view of the increasing activity at the European level, it is recommended to have such a function, if possible. The president deals with strategic matters, the managing director with operational matters, the European Contact Person with may deal with either type of matters or both in as far as they relate to European affairs.

2. EC and committees

Given the diverging interests and priorities of MAs the committees may not all be representative of European psychology. This can be counterbalanced somewhat by using

corresponding members and steering the agenda (via the EC). However, it is neither desirable nor possible for MAs or EC to exercise tight control over the committees. The agenda and the reports shall be a sufficient base to judge whether the committees are doing what might be expected from them.

The current structure has liaisons between the EC and committees. This arrangement is satisfactory but its function could be improved. There is a need for better information sharing with the EC and MAs as well as more responsiveness. To this purpose it is proposed to:

1. Have agendas, minutes and reports of committee meetings available on-line in order for the EC to remain informed about work in progress and achievements, and to open the possibility for MAs to get information from the committees when necessary.
2. To create more awareness and responsiveness in the EC by having fewer but longer meetings as to assure that the work of all committees is reviewed, and if needed supported and guided.
3. Publishing the names and mandates of all committees can help to raise awareness and inform committees about each other's roles.
4. Improved coordination might be obtained by:
 - a) More clearly articulating the difference between Boards and SCs. Boards deal with "principles, methods and standards" regarding the psychological profession as a whole. SCs deal with the profession as practiced in particular areas. This should help demarcating which body is doing what.
 - b) Institutionalizing the **Conveners' Meeting**, which should also offer opportunity for bilateral contacts. This organ can be placed above committees, but without hierarchical linkages. It is an organ for information and coordination
 - c) Creating a digital space where information can be exchanged and documents shared.
 - d) Inviting a member of another committee for consultation.

5. Corresponding members

The interest of MAs in corresponding members has been larger than expected. Some (larger) MAs seem to choose for this to monitor developments, other (peripheral, smaller) because lack of travel funds – a distinction that may reflect in the style of participation. Virtual participation is spreading and increasingly accepted, but conditions need to be created to optimize its effectiveness. At the same time, meetings remain necessary.

To promote active engagement of corresponding the following is proposed:

1. Corresponding members can take part in any email exchange and homework, and this should be encouraged (between meetings);
2. They could be asked to book time to virtually attend meetings, in order to listen or sit in;

3. Meetings could have 2 timeslots (end of first and second half) during which corresponding members can give comments or inputs.
4. Corresponding members should have the possibility to take part in decision-making, but they should express the wish to do so.

3. Presidents Council meeting

The PCM's are attended by most but not all presidents. Moreover, the degree of participation in the meetings is somewhat limited. Language mastery is an issue. It helps to deal with part of the agenda in subgroups, which stimulates involvement.

The possibility for presidents to nominate deputies should remain, but it is suggested that the European Contact Person be the preferred deputy. In countries with fast rotating presidents this would give more stability.

Otherwise no changes are needed. The PCM should act as a sound board and not as a decision making body, except for cases in which the GA gives it a mandate.

4. Operational Support Network

The OSN could take the place that the Network of Secretaries General (NSG) had in the past, but with a newly defined function, i.e. to provide advice, support and coordination regarding the implementation of decisions taken by the GA. This requires that an OSN is established and that MAs nominate members (not necessarily those in the NSG).

A problem is that smaller MAs may not have a staff member who can fulfill this role or lack the resources to attend meetings. This can be resolved by having active and corresponding members. It is desirable that all MAs participate in either way. For smaller MAs this is an opportunity for capacity development at the staff level.

The preferred member of the OSN would be a senior and leading staff member, i.e. the managing director (director, secretary-general, office manager or secretary) referred to above.

An open question is whether there should be a possibility for Associate Members to be involved.

An important issue is the place of the OSN in the EFPA structure and the lines of authority. Individual members are all subordinated to the leadership of the MAs, and cannot carry out direct orders from the EC.

The following rationale may be followed: MAs take part in decision-making by the GA and are subsequently bound to carry out the decisions taken by the GA. These decisions take two forms:

- (1) they shape the agenda and activity plan of the EC (portfolio decisions), or
- (2) they relate to specific issues and stand on their own (itemized decisions).

In the former case the EC – as executer of the GA’s decisions – would ask the MAs to carry out the decisions that it has taken itself as part of the activity plan, and it could, in addition, pose a request to the OSN to support and coordinate the implementation. In the latter case the EC would remind the MA of its obligation to carry out the specific GA decision, and it could request the OSN to provide support and coordination.

In both cases the authority line flows from the MAs to the GA, from the GA to the EC, and from the EC to the MAs as well as the OSN in parallel. Although the priority of actions might be different for individual members of the OSN, there would be no room for conflict between what the MAs and the OSN would be asked to do.

5. Funded projects

The 2010 guideline of the EC seems to work well and should be maintained. Perhaps EFPA can make calls more widely known through the EU Newsheet and advertise the added value of involving EFPA (reputation, visibility, help in disseminating outcomes) to potential applicants.

6. Advice and support by MAs

MAs could be asked to take on projects for EFPA and/or to take part in partnerships. They could be asked what they could offer to other MAs in EFPA (examples are CPD in the UK, or sharing journals). This may be particularly feasible in the area of member services (“Psychology for psychologists”).

In elaborating this, the outcomes of the PCM of Dec 2012 about knowledge sharing should also be taken into account.

To surmount language barriers, EFPA might check the possibility to get EU money for helping minority languages. Another option would be to involve bilingual editors (also for news and professional issues) and translators (e.g., students, as has been offered by EFPSA).

7. The position of TUAC

TUAC represents an entity involved in providing a service to other professionals, via the MAs. In the organization scheme it can be positioned next to EAC, which is somewhat similar in function (see attachment). However, here the national committees are within MASs, not within the jurisdiction of EFPA. TUAC should promote but not impose test user accreditation; the system should remain voluntary and inspired by an interest in “best practice”.

A similar positioning could in the future be chosen for test accreditation.

8. European Psychology Association

There is an inherent contradiction between the mission of EFPA and the national orientation of its members, which becomes more salient with the success of EFPA in the unfolding of its European agenda.

There is a clear group of 200+ volunteers from MAs who work in EFPA for the European cause. However, the large majority of psychologists seem oriented towards the national

setting – even though this is increasingly influenced by Europe. Europe-minded psychologists, which are present all around Europe, cannot be effectively reached through the MAs, and there are constraints on the resources that EFPA can attract from these national associations, e.g. in fees.

The problems with getting sufficient subscriptions for the N-EP, is a striking example. If we go on this way, it may result in a crash, since EFPA will fail to realize its ambitions and Europe's expectations of psychology.

In this context the idea of creating a new European Psychological Association has come up, as an association of individual psychologists “who want more of Europe, be more involved, collaborate more with colleagues abroad, learn more, get more influence, deliver more, obtain more from Europe, identify with European psychology”.

The members of such an association could complement the work of those delegated by the national MAs - in representation and in committee work. And they could raise the interest in Europe in their own national and professional environment. As benefits they could amongst others directly enter subscriptions to the N-EP and other European journals, or subscribe to other services. Could such an association have a place in EFPA?

This seems an interesting idea, which deserves to be elaborated. It is important to reach beyond the academics, who are already internationally oriented and read and speak English. What would be the value proposition for them? Educators and students might also be interested. Perhaps, membership might be interesting for those having EuroPsy.

A European Psychology Association could be either an affiliate member of EFPA or EFPA could open up for individual membership.

Proposals for decisions by GA

The General Assembly is advised to accept the following proposals:

1. Invite MAs to appoint, when practical and feasible, a European Contact Person, as described in item 1 and 3 (above).
2. Endorse as a general guideline the improvements suggested in item 2 (above) concerning the work of committees, their relation to the EC and the permanent establishment of a Convenors' Meeting
3. Transform the Network of Secretaries General into a formal body of EFPA under the name of Operational Support Network as described under item 4 (above) with a probation period of two years to be evaluated.
4. Endorse as general guidelines the suggestions under item 5, Funded projects and item 6, Advice and support by MAs (above).
5. Establish a Working Groups in 2013 to evaluate the pros and cons of forming an individual member based association of European psychologists.

Members of the group:

Robert Roe, EFPA (EC liaison)
Juana Diniz Costa, EFPSA
Gerry Mulhern, Ireland
Ole Tunold, Norway
Tuomo Tikkanen, Finland (corresponding member)