

**“BY ACTING TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE REAL ACHIEVEMENTS”- INTERVIEW  
TO ROBERT A. ROE, THE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF EFPA**

The EFPA General Assembly in Oslo on July 12 2009 elected **Robert A. Roe**, from Holland, as new President of EFPA. He takes over from **Roal Ulrichsen**, who has been president of EFPA since 2007. **Elizabeth A. Campbell** from United Kingdom was elected as Secretary General of EFPA and **Bernard Caruana** from Malta was elected as new Executive Council member.

*Infocop Online* has taken the opportunity to interview **Robert A. Roe**, new president of the European Federation.

**INTERVIEW**

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

I would say, Psychology in Europe is shaping itself. Our profession is known all over Europe and all countries have university-based training programs in psychology, but there is definitely room to improve our public image and gain a better understanding of the roles we can play. For instance, psychologists are widely known to be experts in deviant behavior and mental health, but their expertise in areas such as child development, education, work, community development and successful ageing is much less acknowledged. I see a signs of improvement, though, due to the growing effort of psychologists to join forces and make their profession better known. We are also witnessing significant improvements in university education and professional development practices throughout Europe. EuroPsy is playing a key role, here. It is really promoting collaboration between educators and MA's policy makers across Europe. But of course it's main purpose is to be a transparent quality standard for European psychology that will inform the public about psychologists' level and domain of expertise. Now that EuroPsy has been field-tested in six European countries, including Spain, it will soon be rolled out (target date: January 1, 2010). The same applies to the EuroPsy Specialised Certificates in Psychotherapy and in Work & Organizational Psychology.

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

The Spanish Psychological Association is one of EFPA's most active members. It is a strong organization with a clear drive to improve the education of psychologists and to strengthen psychologists' professional status. I particularly appreciate the efforts that the Spanish colleagues have made in developing and promoting EuroPsy, including the specialized certificates that I just mentioned. The fact that balanced attention is given to all main fields of psychology, makes Spain an excellent example for other countries. I would like to add that the Spanish Psychological Association is known for its interest in European affairs and its openness and readiness to collaborate when it comes to promoting the common cause.

**Could you summarize the goals for the next years as President of EFPA?**

My first goal is to implement EuroPsy and the European Register connected to it. The Register will include the specialized certificates in Psychotherapy, Work and Organizational Psychology and others that may be developed in the future. There is a lot of work to be done and it will take some time before all this functions smoothly, but we will get there. Second, I want to work on the public image of

psychology and on our visibility and impact at the European level. For this, we need to articulate the identity of psychology and explain its diversity. I think it is important to develop information materials that can be used in our marketing. It is not enough that we know what psychologists do and can do, we must communicate it clearly to the outside world. Third, I want to find ways for improving EFPA's lobbying work with the European Commission, the Council of Europe and organizations such as WHO and ILO. I believe a more strategic approach with better coordination is required here. Finally, I want to take a critical look at the current organizational structure and modus operandi of EFPA, and seek possibilities to make it work faster and more effectively. The organization has served us well in the almost 30 years that lie behind us; what we need now is an organization that will help us move forward in the 30 years to come.

**Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?**

Well, I believe in Europe, in the potential of psychology, and in the power of collaboration. By acting together – among ourselves, but occasionally also with other professions – we can make real achievements. I think that we have a good starting point. EFPA has done a remarkable job in the past, thanks to the efforts of the previous presidents, executive officers, and all those active in its organs. Continuing their work in a productive manner will be our greatest challenge.