

## **EFPA Declaration 2006:**

### **The European standards of education and training in professional psychology**

EFPA is a federation of 32 European national psychological associations, including all of the 25 European Union Member States and seven other European countries. EFPA and its member associations represent 165 000 psychologists in Europe. EFPA is a negotiating partner of the European Commission on all matters relating to the standards of education and training, professional practice, and European recognition of psychologists.

It is of major importance to all parties involved that psychological services to persons and organisations are provided by persons who are fully qualified and adhere to clear principles of professional ethics. A high and comprehensive level of education and training in scientific psychology creates the required knowledge basis for professional competences in psychological assessment, intervention and communication.

The European standards of education and training of psychologists who can be deemed competent for independent practice were ratified at the EFPA General Assembly in 2001 and unanimously reconfirmed in 2005. The European Certification in Psychology (EuroPsy) is based on these standards. EFPA has negotiated on the standards with the European Commission since 2002 and the final version of the EuroPsy model was presented to the European Commission in September 2005. EFPA proposes these standards to be the basis for free mobility and automatic recognition in the frame of the Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications 2005/36/EC.

During the period 2005-07, EFPA has been conducting a EuroPsy certification and registration pilot project in six EU Member States: Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. This will be followed by an extension of the EuroPsy registration of qualified psychologists in all 25 EU Member States and seven other European countries. This registration process will be accompanied by the launching of a EuroPsy Professional Card as introduced by the Directive 2005/36/EC to facilitate free mobility of qualified psychologists in Europe.

#### **The EuroPsy requirements for qualification for independent practice are as follows:**

- 1) Completion of education and training in psychology at recognised University level of at least six years' duration, including:
  - a) Master's (or equivalent) level university degree in psychology, of at least five years' duration
  - b) At least one year of supervised practice (included in or added to the university degree programme), and
- 2) Commitment in writing to the ethical code of psychologists in the country of practice and the European Metacode of ethics for psychologists.

With regard to the Bologna process and its expectations that one could train professionals ready for the labour market in three years, EFPA emphasises that in professional psychology

the Bachelor's degree is insufficient and incompatible with European minimal standards for education and training, and with modern, scientifically-based psychological practice.

Only the successful completion of studies in psychology at Master's level provides the necessary competence to assess psychological processes in their complexity, to determine the options and the limits to one's own professional work, and to evaluate assessment results and to start using psychological interventions independently. This high quality and level of basic education and training of psychologists is also the necessary prerequisite for the specialist education and training in areas or methods of psychological intervention, such as psychotherapy.

The title and/or the profession of psychologists are legally regulated in the majority of the EU Member States and other EEA countries. This regulation restricts the use of the title psychologist and the independent practice of the profession to persons who have completed at least the Master's level University degree or its equivalent in psychology and who have the necessary practical experience required for independent practice.

This regulation is quite strictly controlled by the competent authorities of the Member States because of the sensitive nature of psychological services with regard to health and consumer protection. As the Directive 2005/36/EC states in its foreword, point 44: "This Directive is without prejudice to measures necessary to ensure a high level of health and consumer protection." This means that the competent authorities of the Member States are obliged to evaluate the quality of professional education and training that is considered necessary for independent practice in psychology.

By 2008, EFPA will launch the full-scale EuroPsy certification and registration process in all 32 Member countries. EFPA will also present the EuroPsy model to all EU Member States and other governments' competent authorities for acceptance as an automatic tool for the recognition of professional qualifications in psychology between European countries.

We are convinced the EuroPsy standard is the best possible way to guarantee both good quality and free mobility of qualified psychologists and psychological services in Europe. The EuroPsy standard is also sufficiently synchronised with existing legal and other regulations in order to be accepted by the competent authorities of the EU Member States.

EFPA Presidents Council

Athens, July 16, 2006