

Open Letter to all ECPP Members

Barbara Fitzgerald, Nicole Akin, Markus Föh, Past Honorary Presidents ECPP

Dear Colleagues!

When we founded ECPP 16 years ago in Lvov/Ukraine, we had the vision of embracing all psychotherapeutic practitioners working with the principles of (unconscious) resistance and transference. We wanted to create an inclusive organisation uniting colleagues with the same psychoanalytical spirit.

ECPP has grown to become an adolescent, with all its inner turmoil and creative capacities. We are passing through a period of transition and crisis.

In such a period trust, strong guidance and a stable internal and external frame is needed. We, past and honorary presidents, are concerned, that our organisation may suffer severe damage if we are not acting wisely.

It is within this context that we want to share our thoughts with you.

1. Rules of Conduct dealing with inevitable conflicts

In every organisation, especially in a developing one like ours, conflicts are inevitable. Such conflicts can often be about issues, or conflicts between people and indeed these could be welcome as part of an emerging identity. The main question is: How are we addressing and dealing with conflicts? The essential point here is that the aggression is channeled and some crucial limits are not transgressed. The most important limit is: The organisation itself must not be attacked, and the people duly elected in leadership positions working on behalf of ECPP and serving the organisation must not be attacked personally either. The battle has to be a battle of ideas, and not a war against persons or a war against the organisation itself. If this boundary is crossed, there is an onus on the organisation to defend itself, and procedures and measures of exclusion are inevitable. We appeal to all people involved in conflicts not to violate these limits.

2. The legal status of ECPP

We, past presidents of ECPP, guarantee with our integrity and our word, that ECPP from the very beginning has been a legal and legally registered organization fully compliant with law (having its headquarter in Austria, under Austrian law). Every other insinuation or statement taking into question this fact is false and has to be considered as an attack on the reputation of ECPP as a whole, causing reputational damage, and also as an insult of all our certified and fee paying individuals and organisational members believing in the purpose of our organisation. Of course, like every young organisation, we suffer from some gaps in organisational and administrative rules and procedures. These gaps should be addressed in a democratic process, solutions will be found, and the discussions should not escalate to personal insults and devaluation of the organisation itself.

3. Perspectives

Thanks to all the members, the present and past board members and presidents, our organisation has grown, and of course, due to the historical development of psychoanalysis, especially psychoanalysis in Russia, the majority of our members are Russian colleagues. The conflict which has arisen in the community of our Russian members is therefore also part of the normal difficult development of a young organization, and we should handle it carefully.

We strongly believe that the present Board and President of ECPP has analysed the situation thoroughly and taken the necessary steps to avert harm from our organization. We express our full trust and support for the Board and President, Adrian Rhodes, leading ECPP through this crisis.

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Barbara Fitzgerald, Nicole Akinin, Markus Fähr