

Slovenian Psychologists' Association: A new EAWOP Constituent Member

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Information about the author

Matic Kadliček is current President of Work and Organizational Psychology Division in the Slovenian Psychologists' Association (SPA, for contact details see the end of this article). He is employed by Trgotur, Human Resources Outsourcing, Ltd. where his main roles are employee selection, psychological assessment, coaching, working environment analyses and performance training for client companies.

The Slovenian Psychologists' Association (SPA)

The last EAWOP General Assembly on May 23rd in Münster, Germany accepted Slovenia as a Constituent Member of EAWOP. Slovenia is represented by the Division of Work and Organizational Psychology (DWOP) of the Slovenian Psychologists' Association (SPA).

SPA was established in 1976 and is currently the only psychologists' association in Slovenia, thus standing

as a national association that links psychologists over the entire country and across all fields. SPA used to have around 600 full members; but this dropped quite significantly in a "silent period" following 2006 when the clinical psychologists established their own association. The number of members has steadily been growing since and currently there are more than 200 members in the association.

SPA full members hold at least a university degree in Psychology and may be members of one or more of the following Divisions:

- Division of Work and Organizational Psychology (the largest Division);
- Division of Psychologists working in Social Care;
- Division for Sports Psychology;
- Division of Educational Psychology;
- Division for Occupational Medicine, Traffic and Sports Medicine;

- Division for Psychotherapy and Psychological Counseling;
- Ethical Committee;
- Awards Committee;
- Court of Honor;
- Committee for Psycho-diagnostic Tools;
- National Committee for granting the EuroPsy Certificate.

SPA's vision is to have an active role connecting psychologists from the various fields with the aim of: a) building recognition for the profession and improving competencies; and b) ensuring mutual professional support, education and sharing of information. As a whole, the association draws its rules and statutes from similar organizations (EFPA and EAWOP). SPA Divisions, which are grouped similarly to most Psychology departments of universities, provide and facilitate strong links between academia and applied psychology through the exchange of best practice and up-to-date knowledge. This is

achieved through workshops or training sessions, lectures, annual professional meetings (Psychologists' Days) and quadrennial conferences (the latter are currently paused due to the recession and wider financial difficulties being experienced in our country) (Pictures 1-4).

For example, at the end of April 2013, SPA hosted the EFPA Board of Ethics in Ljubljana (link: <http://ethics.efpa.eu/meetings-/april-2013-ljubljana>) where host professors were representing their countries in the area of ethics in Psychology. One of the aims of the meeting was the development of a joint model (a Model Code). The first version of it is currently under the discussion of all EFPA members and was given substantial attention at the last General Assembly of EFPA in Stockholm 2013 (Pictures 5-6).

Pictures 1-4. Psychologists' Days



Pictures 5-6



The Association publishes a scientific journal called Horizons of Psychology, dedicated to psychological matters, with four issues being available each year. The Association also co-publishes Anthropos; an interdisciplinary journal covering topics in psychology, philosophy, sociology and other humanistic fields. In addition, our member services are able to support a number of international mobility and knowledge exchange projects between professionals across the EU (being funded for the second year running by the Leonardo da Vinci exchange programme). SPA is striving to open the Association outwards and achieve a greater public presence. This is being done by issuing statements about topics that demand professional opinion, sponsoring or endorsing events (e.g., descriptions of specific training programmes, coaching conferences) and by publishing short articles (known as digests) that are available on-line for the general public.

We have also been awarding the EuroPsy certificate for those SPA members that meet the criteria. In this way the EuroPsy provides a much needed common professional framework, that, sadly, our national

legislation at present lacks. We have been pushing for a law, defining the work of psychologists since 1994, but have so far been unsuccessful in our efforts.

SPA as a whole is currently focusing its attention towards promoting the work of psychologists to a wider audience and thus opening our Association and profession outwards. In this effort, our Facebook profile with digests of interesting psychology papers strive towards greater media exposure. To date this approach has proven effective since the Facebook page amassed 895 followers (to date of this publication) and psychologists are being invited to public debates and interviews more often. Even more importantly, the result is the strengthening of co-operation with an increasing number of other institutions and profiles; like the Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster, Agency for Traffic Safety, Institute of intergenerational cooperation (Ypsilon) and co-operation with psychology students' associations, rehabilitation programmes and Sports Psychology Day with our National Olympic Committee and other sports associations.

Picture 8 SPA General Assembly 2012



The Division of Work and Organizational Psychology (DWOP)

DWOP currently has 313 members and is growing, making it the largest section in our Association. DWOP connects psychologists working in the various fields of Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP) such as Human Resource departments in companies and public offices, the Employment Service of Slovenia, consultancies and educational companies, coaches and researchers of WOP.

Besides providing members of the Division with important events regarding their professional development (training sessions,

courses and exchanges) DWOP also organises two visits per year to successful Slovenian companies. The aim of these visits being the exchange and learning of best practice and networking amongst DWOP members. In these exchanges we cover topics such as: talent management; work motivation; creativity and innovation; organizational culture; career counseling; and leadership development.

Picture 6 Teambuilding workshops



Picture 7 Newly graduated psychology students (2012) pledge to abide to ethical and professional standards.



Current events and future plans

DWOP is currently spearheading a project of connecting experienced psychologists with their young colleagues through establishing a mentoring network. This is quickly becoming an association-wide endeavour and we are now in negotiations with a company to provide an on-line platform to encourage experienced professionals to share

their knowledge with younger experts-to-be. The next phase of this project will include setting ethical standards for such semi-formal mentoring pairs and enabling a distinction to be made between developmental mentoring with young people and supervisory mentoring within the EuroPsy framework.

In addition to the above, SPA is addressing several tough issues in WOP. Currently these are: a) Preventing the unauthorised use of psychological assessment tools amongst non-Psychologists; b) Combating the use of non-Psychologists to teach Psychology in high schools (implemented to support our country's austerity measures); c) Setting standards for Psychologists who provide judicial expert opinions; and d) Addressing expertise dilemmas in the execution of national rehabilitation programmes for car drivers found driving under the influence of alcohol.

Motivation for joining EAWOP

Since the mission of EAWOP is to promote and support the development and application of WOP and to facilitate links between scientists and practitioners working in this field; this

perfectly overlaps with the mission of DWOP. Joining a Europe-wide community of WOP professionals thus provides our Association with up-to-date resources through easier access to journals (EJWOP, OPR, EAWOP In-Practice), congresses, summer schools and WorkLabs (practitioner skills workshops). A more important benefit we wish to share with EAWOP would be reaching out to policy makers as a community; being much stronger than separate initiatives. It is becoming ever clearer that sharing a common European economy requires an ever increasingly multicultural approach, where EAWOP could contribute irreplaceable knowledge to us.

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