



Report 2013-2015 of the EFPA Task Force on Human Rights

To the EFPA General Assembly in Milano, July 11-12, 2015

Executive summary

The Task Force on Human Rights and Psychology was established for the period 2013 – 2015 with the aim to give proposals of activities EFPA may develop to raise awareness of Human Rights and (risks of) human rights violations, prevent human rights violations, and alleviate the effects of Human Rights violations, considering the observations in the document 'EFPA's role regarding Human Rights' 2013. At the date of this report the Task Force has been working for 14 months, met three times in various places, three times virtually and once with the Board of Ethics. The members evaluate their collaboration very positively. The report describes the Task Force's activities, in particular (a) drafting a proposal for EFPA's policy and action in the area of Human Rights, (b) suggestions as to how Human Rights can best be anchored in EFPA, (c) possibilities for cooperation with relevant agencies related with protection of Human Rights, and (d) cooperation with the Board of Ethics. The Task Force proposes to the GA (1) to promote and support education of Human Rights for psychologists and psychology students, and (2) to give press releases or organise events / symposia on the days that promote human rights.

Introduction

[This report covers the activities of the Task Force in Human Rights performed during the official period July 2013 – June 2015 and the actual period April 2014 – June 2015.](#)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as a basis document for the promotion of the wellbeing of Humanity, can be an immense inspiration for psychologists.

Respect for the Dignity of Persons and Peoples is a leading principle. Psychologists have a duty to promote human wellbeing and Human Rights. There are strong links between the ethical and professional behavior of psychologists, the promotion of Human Rights and the prevention of Human Rights violations, as well as dealing with the consequences of such violations. As stated in the preamble of the EFPA Meta-Code, psychologists 'aspire to use their privileged knowledge to improve the condition of both the individual and society'. Psychology as a science and as a profession has accumulated a great deal of knowledge and expertise on the psychological mechanisms through which violation of Human Rights, institutional and everyday discrimination, exclusion of minority groups and the effects of poverty and inequity can come about. There is substantial research that has relevance for public policy. In addition, psychologists are knowledgeable about the development and administration of intervention programs promoting Human Rights. Because of this

background, psychologists have the professional competence to help those affected psychologically by Human Rights violations.

The General Assembly of EFPA established in July 2013 an EFPA Task Force on Human Rights that will develop proposals regarding the activities that EFPA may develop to raise awareness of human rights and (risks of) human rights violations, prevent human rights violations, and alleviate the effects of human rights violations.

Its main objectives are:

- to liaise with the Board of Ethics;
- drafting a proposal for EFPA's policy and action in the area of Human Rights, to be presented at the General Assembly 2015;
- developing a proposal as to how Human Rights can best be anchored in EFPA, with involvement of all Boards, Standing Committees and Task Forces;
- exploring possibilities for cooperation with European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and the Regional Representative for Europe of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Activities

1. Work Plan ^{1 2}

Writing a work plan for 2013 – 2015 with an overall policy and actions.

Activities as performed and achievements

- As the task force on Human Rights had its first meeting April 8 2014, the Work Plan covers the period 2014 – 2015.
- The first draft of the Work Plan has been sent to EFPA EC in September 2014.
- The final text has been approved by the EC.
- An action plan with specific tasks, dates and names facilitated the progress of the activities.

2. Policy paper

Presenting a policy paper at the General Assembly 2015 in Milan. This policy paper includes the contribution EFPA can make to Human Rights, based on the unique expertise and competence of psychology and psychologists.

Activities as performed and achievements:

- Policy for HR and Psychology was discussed during the meetings in Utrecht, The Netherlands, September 12 2014, and Athens, Greece, April 2015. It was drafted by a subgroup and discussed by e-mail circulation and Skype meetings.³
- This will be further discussed during the symposium Human Rights, Education of Psychologists in Professional and Ethical Responsibilities

3. Anchoring Human Rights in EFPA bodies:

Developing a proposal as to how Human Rights can best be anchored in EFPA, with involvement of all Boards, Standing Committees and Task Forces to be presented in the policy paper for EFPA.³

Activities as performed and achievements:

In order to make a start several actions were taken:

- The task force Human Rights was presented to EFPA members in a form of a motivational letter that promotes awareness of human rights and calls for cooperation;
- A survey has been distributed among the EFPA MAs to see what place Human Rights take in their respective codes of ethics as well as in their statutes. This survey meant to be a first step. One fifth MAs provided responses. The major concerns of the task force on Human Rights is that the answers on the questions related to major violations of Human Rights and examples of good initiatives require more research and maybe that is why the response rate was lower. The conclusion is that more awareness is necessary among the MAs about the contribution psychologists can make to Human Rights before being able to give adequate answers.⁴
- A list of examples of good practices of the MAs and of individual psychologists in the field of promoting Human Rights, of actions against violations and of helping victims, was put on the website.⁴
- More members are involved in the TF Human Rights.
- A website task force Human Rights has been constructed on the general EFPA site to increase visibility, availability and give information to the MAs, boards, task forces and standing committees:
 - A mini website was created and maintained, members of the task force on Human Rights were introduced at the website, meetings' minutes were put on,

information on Human Rights and psychology has been created with easy access to practical information and material of relevance to psychologists.

- Press releases were placed on the website.
- The convenor had been invited to give a presentation “*Human Rights, a responsibility of psychologists*”, at the International Congress of Applied Psychology in Paris, July 2014.
- One member of the TFHR supported establishing a *Human Rights and Psychology* group in one of the MAs. One Member Association had already an active Human Rights group.

4. To make a strong liaison with the Board of Ethics, in order to promote the position of Human Rights in the Model Code and –subsequently- the national codes.

Activities as performed and achievements

- Written suggestions for a new Model Code were made.
- A meeting of the task Force on Human Rights with representatives of the BoE in Oslo, Norway, was initiated, January 13, 2015, in order to come to a more explicit mentioning and integration of Human Rights in the EFPA Model Code of Ethics. The meeting was on invitation of the Norwegian association.
- The new text has been accepted by the BoE and will be presented to the GA in Milan.

5. When appropriate, advise the EC on how to react to events relevant for Human Rights and prepare a press release for special days like the International Human Rights Day (10 December) and Children's Rights Day (20 November).

Activities as performed and Achievements:

- A press release for Children's Rights Day (November 20) was presented to EFPA and subsequently sent around.
- Also a press release for the International Human Rights Day (December 10) was presented to EFPA and sent around.

- Advice was given to EFPA EC to give a response to the US Senate's Intelligence Committee report on CIA interrogations, in support of the position of the American Psychological Association (APA), that 'European professional ethics leaves no room for psychologists entering situations in which they could become bystander or participant in abuse' .

6. Exploring possibilities for cooperation with the European Union for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in Vienna, and the Regional Representative for Europe of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other important agencies as much is possible in the limited time.

Activities as performed and Achievements:

- The head of Equality and Citizens' Rights Department of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), is willing to give a presentation at the double symposium of the task force on Human Rights at the ECP2015 in Milan.
- A meeting with the FRA is planned for June 2015.
- The EIUC (The European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation) in Venice and the task force on Human Rights are working together towards an expert meeting for Human Rights Education for Psychologists.
- A regular contact has been established with the ECP (European Committee for the prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment).
- A regular contact with the WHO European Mental Health Action Plan is maintained.
- There are contacts with several European and national Human Rights bodies.

7. Other activities

Activities and Achievements:

- The Norwegian member of the task force on Human Rights participated in the Universal Periodic Report (UPR) process on Norway in the Human rights Council in Geneva April 8th (pre-session) and May 28th (Session) 2014. The UPR mechanism is an important pillar of the Human Rights Council established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007. It is a process in which NGOs and Civil society agencies provide information on national HR issues to the General Assembly.

- A double symposium *Human Rights, Education of Psychologists in Professional and Ethical Responsibilities*, for the ECP2015 in Milan, July 2015, has been prepared, under the responsibility of the task force on Human Rights. Presenters (alphabetical): Ioannis N. Dimitrakopoulos, Janel Gauthier, Artemis Giotsa, Polli Hagenaaers, Peter Kinderman, Kerstin Söderström, Nora Sveaas and Ava Thompson. Discussant: Ulrich Wagner.
- The Norwegian member provided input for EFPA's comment/contribution to the WHO European mental health Action Plan.
- The French member contributed to a document *PROTECT, early recognition of victims of torture in European countries*.
- Answering requests from European members or organizations about whether Human Rights are violated. The discussion within the task force on Human Rights about how and when to respond to such requests will be continued. A document will be made in due time.
- All members were involved in studying literature, reports, documents. They also visited workshops, symposia, conferences, relevant organizations, refugees and other groups under threat.

Meetings

- 1) April 8, 2014, Brussels, Belgium
- 2) September 12, 2014, Utrecht, The Netherlands
- 3) November 3, 2014, Skype meeting
- 4) January 13, 2015, meeting in Oslo, Norway, with the Board of Ethics. Participating Nina Dalen and Henk Geertsema (BoE), Polli Hagenaaers and Kerstin Söderström (TF HR), with the participation of Human Rights expert Nora Sveaass and senior adviser Tove Beate Pedersen from the Norwegian Psychological Association.
- 5) January 27, 2015, Skype meeting
- 6) March 4, 2015, Skype meeting
- 7) April 25, 2015, Athens, Greece

Information & recommendations for GA & Member Associations

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

1. To stimulate the forming of a Human Rights group in the member associations.
2. To support MAs to link with the national Human Rights institutions.

3. The convenors of the Standing Committees, Boards and Task forces will receive a survey with questions how Human Rights are integrated in their main documents, plans and activities.
4. To give publicity to or to organize events / symposia on the following International UN Days:
 - March 21, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in October 1966 as International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
 - November 20, Universal Children's Day. The date 20 November, marks the day on which the Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.
 - October 17, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty can be traced back to 17 October 1987. On that day, over a hundred thousand people gathered at the Trocadéro in Paris where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948, to honour the victims of extreme poverty, violence and hunger.
 - December 2, The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, marks the date of the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (2 December 1949).
 - December 10, Human Rights Day. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 10 December as Human Rights Day in 1950, to bring to the attention 'of the peoples of the world' the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.
5. To present an action plan for EFPA MAs to motivate and inspire them to promote awareness of their members of Human Rights, and present ways to prevent violation of Human Rights and to alleviate the effects of Human Rights violations.
6. To work together on awareness of and knowledge about the relation between Human Rights and psychology through press releases, web site, communication with EFPA bodies and member associations, and presentations and publications to psychologists and the general public.

Proposals for decisions by GA

The General Assembly is advised to endorse the following proposals:

1. As the work of the task force on Human Rights has just started, to decide to continue the task force on Human Rights and transform it into a Standing Committee.
2. To discuss the draft Policy Paper on Human Rights and Psychology and to give feedback. (will be sent May 2015)
3. To support the organizing of an expert meeting *Human Rights Education for Psychologists* in cooperation with the Board of Education and the EIUC, during the academic year 2015-2016, in order to assemble and integrate available perspectives, existing curricula and best practices on the education of Human Rights for psychologists and to formulate a set of recommendations for a 'Human Rights for psychologists' curriculum, including different aspects psychology can contribute.

Members of the group:

EC liaison	Robertas Povilaitis, <i>EC Liaison</i>
Croatia	Marlena Plavšić
Cyprus	Stella Petronda
France	Karin Teepe
Germany	Ulrich Wagner
Greece	Artemis Giotsa
Netherlands	Polli Hagenaars, <i>convenor</i>
Norway	Kerstin Söderström
Romania	Mihai Anitei
EFPSA	Bogdan Isac
Turkey	Ulaş Başar Gezgin, <i>corresponding member</i> (since March 2015)
Turkey	Yudit Namer, <i>corresponding member</i> (till March 2015)
United Kingdom	Tony Wainwright, <i>corresponding member</i>
Switzerland	Dolores Krapf, <i>corresponding member</i>
Finland	Ville Ritola, <i>observer</i> Gert Sommer, <i>consultant</i>

¹ see attachments GA Tasks and references

² see workplan 2013-2015

³ A draft proposal will be sent to the EC in May 2015

⁴ see document TFHR survey-outcome