



# The European Certificate for Psychotherapy

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## Preamble

In 1991, the European Association for Psychotherapy was founded in Vienna, Austria by a number of European countries. It now brings together nearly 200 organisations, from about 40 European countries, with both national organisations and European-wide organisations in many different modalities, and by that, more than 120 000 psychotherapists.

The European Association for Psychotherapy (hereafter, the EAP) is concerned to protect the interest of this profession and the public it serves, by ensuring that the profession functions at an appropriate level of training and practice. One of its aims is to establish an European Certificate of Psychotherapy (hereafter, the ECP), which will help ensure that psychotherapists are trained to the EAP's standards and which will help guarantee the mobility of professional psychotherapists. This is in accordance with the aims of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the non-discrimination accord valid within the framework of the European Union (EU), and the principle of freedom of movement of persons and services. The European Certificate of Psychotherapy is in alignment with the European Standard EN 45013.

The 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1990 Strasbourg Declaration on Psychotherapy is the bedrock of its commitment to creating a compatible and independent profession of psychotherapy across Europe.

## Definitions

The revised Statutes of the EAP (June, 2008)<sup>1</sup> define this document as: "... a European Certificate of Psychotherapy Document (ECP Document) to provide guidelines for the procedure and criteria of training and qualifications". (Statutes: \* 2.5); and it is also mentioned in \* 4.1.2.1; \* 4.1.3.1.

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<sup>1</sup> \*Statutes, final voted version, Brussels June 2008

There is also mention of: " ... a register of psychotherapists who have qualified for the European Certificate of Psychotherapy". (Statutes: \* 13.1); and the European Training Standards Committee (ETSC), the National Umbrella Organisations Committee (NUOC), the European Wide Organisations Committee (EWOC), and the Registration Committee are established as sub-committees of the Governing Board (Statutes: \* 5.2.5). The Scientific Validation Committee is a sub-committee of the ETSC. The Training & Accreditation Committee (TAC) is a sub-committee of the Governing Board<sup>2</sup>. The Grandparenting Advisory Panel (GAP) is defined here (10.2.2).

## Documents

Statutes of the EAP; EAP's Statement of Ethical Principles; the Register of ECP holders; and this document are the main papers of the EAP. The Guidelines for Procedures and By-Laws of the EAP's Governing Board and all its committees & sub-committees are in the process of being accepted. The TAC document, establishing the procedure for accepting EAPTIs, was established by the Board in Vienna, Feb. 2003.

## 1. Bodies involved in the award of the ECP

### 1.1. The European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP)

1.1.1. Unless otherwise specified, reference to the EAP should be taken to mean the Governing Board of the EAP, or any body within the EAP authorised by the Governing Board. In matters dealing with the ECP, this would usually be the European Training Standards Committee (ETSC), the TAC and the Registration Committee.

### 1.2. National Awarding Organisation (NAO)

- 1.2.1. A National Awarding Organisation (hereafter, NAO) must be an organisational member of the EAP in good standing.
- 1.2.2. The National Awarding Organization must be an independent legal entity with its head office in the country for which it acts as a National Organization for psychotherapy, and with statutes, regulations or other written constitutions, which are compatible with the statutes of the EAP.
- 1.2.3. The NAO must be; either that countries National Umbrella Organization (EAP statutes 4.1.2) i.e. a single organization within a country that is recognized by the EAP as demonstrably the largest organization representing the broadest range of different approaches to psychotherapy in that country; or, if there is no National Umbrella Organization, a member organization of the EAP based in the country concerned, may be recognized by the EAP as able to act as the NAO. A National Umbrella Organisation may be appointed a National Awarding Organisation as stipulated below. (EAP Statutes: 4.1.2.1)
- 1.2.3.1. To become a NAO, a National Umbrella Organisation (NUO) must be accredited by the EAP as having:
- (1) Ethical guidelines which are binding on any practitioners which it may recommend for the award of the Certificate;
  - (2) Disciplinary and complaints procedures which may lead to disciplinary action against any practitioners which it may recommend for the award of the Certificate and, if appropriate, their removal from the Register.
  - (3) Training standards, compatible with the EAP, and methods of applying them.
- 1.2.3.2. The NUO will be referred to the National Umbrella Organisations Committee (NUOC) who has a process to check the details of their application. If the organisation seems suitable, they will be recommended to the Governing Board for approval as a NAO.
- 1.2.3.3. Initially, if it is wished to be able to recommend practitioners for the award of the Certificate who have not completed an accredited training and are currently practising, the NAO must also have suitable procedures for 'grand-parenting' those practitioners.
- 1.2.3.4. The NAO must reapply every seven years to renew its awarding status. There may be a fee for considering reapplications, which will be set by the EAP. These criteria are in the Procedures for NUOC.

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<sup>2</sup> Agreed in Florence, June 2007.

- 1.2.4. NAOs represent psychotherapy in that country, approve Training Organisations, register and recommend practitioners for the ECP.

### **1.3. European Wide Accrediting Organisation (EWAO)**

- 1.3.1. The European Wide Accrediting Organisation (hereafter, EWAO) must be an organisational member of the EAP in good standing.
- 1.3.2. The European Wide Accrediting Organization must be an independent legal entity with its head office in a European country and with statutes, regulations or other written constitution, which are compatible with the statutes of the EAP and must represent the interests of its modality of psychotherapy in the whole of Europe.
- 1.3.3. A European Wide Organisation (EWO) (EAP Statutes 4.1.3.) may be appointed a European Wide Accrediting Organisation as stipulated below. (EAP Statutes: 4.1.3.1)
  - 1.3.3.1. The EWO must have, in each of six or more European countries, either, a training at or above the level required for the ECP; or, have, as members, professional organisations with trainings at this level. It must have the large majority of its members living in European countries.
  - 1.3.3.2. To become an EWAO, a European Wide Organisation (EWO) must be accredited by the EAP, which requires that:
    - (1) Its accreditation processes must be at or above a standard compatible with the award of the ECP. It must represent a specific modality of psychotherapy as demonstrated by the criteria in § 3.
    - (2) This modality must be: either, clearly distinct from any other modality represented by a European Wide Organisation in the EAP; or it must represent the largest number of practitioners in this modality of any European Wide Organisation member of the EAP.
    - (3) It must be the only EWAO for that modality.
  - 1.3.3.3. The EWO will be referred to the European Wide Organisations Committee (EWOC) who will have a process to check the details of their application. If the organisation seems suitable, they will be recommended to the Governing Board for approval as an EWAO.
  - 1.3.3.4. The EWAO must reapply every seven years to renew its accrediting status. There may be a fee for considering reapplications, which will be set by the EAP. These criteria are in the Procedures for EWOC.
- 1.3.4. EWAOs accredit Training Organisations and register psychotherapists in their method or modality of psychotherapy.

### **1.4. Training Organisations**

- 1.4.1. Training Organisations must be members in good standing of their country's NAO and of the relevant EWAO.
- 1.4.2. Training Organisations must be appropriately registered, and have their administration and finances in good order. The Training Organisation must have appropriate ethical standards and complaints procedures for its trainees.
- 1.4.3. A training programme, accepted by the EAP as leading to the ECP, must conform to the criteria of the ECP, must be accredited by the relevant EWAO and must be approved by the relevant NAO.
- 1.4.4. Only trainees successfully graduating from an accredited and approved 4-year (minimum) training programme in psychotherapy undertaken at a European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institute (EAPTI), having been properly accepted by the Training & Accreditations Committee (TAC) of the EAP, will be eligible to apply for the ECP.
- 1.4.5. Criteria and procedures for accepting EAPTIs are established by the TAC, and are accepted by the EAP Board.

## **2. Conditions for the award of the European Certificate of Psychotherapy**

- 2.1. The procedure and conditions for the award of the ECP will normally be determined by the European Training Standards Committee (ETSC) of the Governing Board of the EAP.
- 2.2. The ECP will be awarded to practitioners of psychotherapy (hereafter, practitioners) whose accredited and approved training has been fully completed and who are committed to professional and ethical standards consistent with those of the EAP.

- 2.3. A register of people who have been awarded the ECP, the European Register of Psychotherapists (hereafter the ERP), will be published and maintained by the EAP.

### **3. Psychotherapy modalities**

- 3.1. The method of psychotherapy used (hereafter, modality) must be well defined and distinguishable from other psychotherapy modalities and have a clear theoretical basis in the human sciences.
- 3.2. The theory must be integrated with the practice, be applicable to a broad range of problems, and have been demonstrated to be effective.
- 3.3. The scientific validity of the modality must have been accepted by the EAP and it must have been recognised in several European countries as valid by relevant professional organisations.

### **4. Length and content of psychotherapy training**

- 4.1. The total duration of the training will not be less than 3200 hours, spread over a minimum of seven years, with the first three years being the equivalent of a relevant university degree. The later four years of which must be in a training specific to psychotherapy. The EAP will, in collaboration with NAOs and EWAOs, determine the proportion of the training elements that need to be completed prior to the ECP being awarded.
- 4.2. The training meets the EAP's criteria for basic professional training, and includes the following elements:
  - 4.2.1. Personal Psychotherapeutic Experience, or equivalent. This should be taken to include training analysis, self-experience, and other methods involving elements of self-reflection, therapy, and personal experience (not less than 250 hours). No single term is agreed by all psychotherapy methods. Any training shall include arrangements to ensure that the trainees can identify and appropriately manage their involvement in and contributions to the processes of the psychotherapies that they practice in accordance with their specific methods.
  - 4.2.2. Theoretical Study: There will be a general part of university or professional training and a part which is specific to psychotherapy. University or professional courses leading to a first University degree or its equivalent professional qualification in subjects relevant to psychotherapy may be allowed as a part of, or the whole of, the general part of psychotherapy theory, but cannot contribute towards the 4 years of specific psychotherapy training. Theoretical study during the 4 years of training specific to psychotherapy should include the following elements:
    - Theories of human development throughout the life-cycle
    - \* An understanding of other psychotherapeutic approaches
    - \* A theory of change
    - \* An understanding of social and cultural issues in relation to psychotherapy
    - \* Theories of psychopathology
    - \* Theories of assessment and intervention
  - 4.2.3. Practical Training: This will include sufficient practice under continuous supervision appropriate to the psychotherapeutic modality and will be at least two years in duration.
  - 4.2.4. Placement in a mental health setting, or equivalent professional experience: The placement must provide adequate experience of psycho-social crisis and of collaboration with other specialists in the mental health field.
- 4.3. Supervision, training and, where applicable, personal psychotherapy should be provided by practitioners whose training meets the criteria of the ECP. Advanced trainings for trainers and supervisors are not covered by these criteria, but will be required.
- 4.4. Training courses are required to be registered with their relevant NAO and accredited by their relevant EWAO. Then they are recommended to apply to the Training & Accreditation Committee (TAC)) for European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institute (EAPTI) status.

The detailed criteria and procedures for obtaining EAPTI status are contained in the TAC document. The TAC is responsible for checking and accepting the quality and procedures of the training organisation and subsequently recommending it to the Governing Board for EAPTI status.

## 5. Completion of Training

- 5.1. By the end of the training, the trainee (now a practitioner) will have to have demonstrated personal, social and professional maturity and a commitment to working to a professional code and ethical standards.
- 5.2. There will be an assessment of both theoretical and practical work.
- 5.3. The practitioner should have completed required university or equivalent training in human or social sciences and the specialised 4-years of psychotherapy training, within organisations training in the same method of psychotherapy.
- 5.4. The practitioner must be in a professional organisation which has an ethical code, complaints and disciplinary procedure consistent with and recognised by their NAO and the relevant EWAO.
- 5.5. The NAOs and EWAOs will determine how Training Organisations finally assess trainees of approved & accredited training programmes.

## 6. Awarding Procedures

- 6.1. EAP recognises that some aspects of training are confidential and some may be commercially sensitive. Materials used in training may be the intellectual property of the trainers, of the Training Organisation, or of others. Members of the EAP and of the other bodies involved in the award of the ECP have a duty to safeguard the confidentiality and the ownership of such material made available to them under these criteria.
- 6.2. The ECP will be awarded by the EAP according to these criteria and this procedure in two ways (Direct Award or Grandparenting procedure):
  - 6.2.1. By "Direct Award" for individuals who have graduated from a training organisation that has been recognised by the relevant NAO and EWAO and accredited by the TAC and that has been awarded European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institute (EAPTI) status.
  - 6.2.2. By "Grandparenting procedure" for established psychotherapists who have previously completed a proper psychotherapy training (or equivalent) and have had a professional psychotherapeutic practice for at least 3 years after their graduation:
    - 6.2.2.1. On the recommendation of the appropriate National Awarding Organisation (NAO). The applicant needs to be a member of the NAO (or of an organisational member of the NAO) in their country (or, if one doesn't exist, a NAO that is prepared to act for psychotherapists in that country) and so get on their Register of Psychotherapists.  
And with an accreditation from the appropriate European Wide Accrediting Organisation (EWAO) representing the practitioner's modality of psychotherapy.
    - 6.2.2.2. If a relevant EWAO does not exist, the NAO can apply, on the individual's behalf, to the Grandparenting Advisory Panel (GAP) (see 10.2.2.).
- 6.3. The award of the ECP will proceed in steps as follows:
  - 6.3.1. The ECP application must contain a 'Curriculum Vitae' in English
  - 6.3.2. A valid membership certificate from their NAO;
  - 6.3.3. A signature of agreement to the EAP Statement of Ethical Principles; and
  - 6.3.4. A signature on the Strasbourg Declaration about Psychotherapy, and
  - 6.3.5. The appropriate ECP fee and their ERP registration fee for the first 5 years.

- 6.3.6. For "Direct Award" a certificate of graduation from their EAPTI and their 'Practitioner Registration Form for the Direct Award'.
- 6.3.7. For established practitioners ("Grandparenting procedure"), the applicant sends their completed ECP application to their relevant NAO where it is checked and this is sent to the relevant EWAO. The EWAO must return the application with an approval / objection to the NAO within 6 weeks, otherwise the file is presented by the NAO to the GAP (see 6.2.2.2.).
- 6.4. The EAPTI can provide an upgrading program for applicants who have graduated from the training institute less than 3 years before the training institute was accredited as an EAPTI, in order to bring those applicants up to the current ECP standard.
- 6.5. Applicants who have graduated more than 3 years before the school's accreditation as an EAPTI are subject to the procedures outlined in section 6.3.

## **7. Registration**

- 7.1. Individuals who have been awarded the ECP will be listed in the European Register of Psychotherapists (ERP).
- 7.2. The ECP is awarded for life, inclusion in the Register is renewable every 5 years.
- 7.3. The Registration Committee will be responsible for recording the details of practitioners holding the ECP.
- 7.4. All registered practitioners are required to be a member of a NAO or a suitable National or European Organisation linked to the EAP for quality assurance of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and ethical practice. The details of the CPD requirements are under the responsibility of the relevant NAO.
- 7.5. The Registration Committee will publish the ERP, electronically and otherwise, and will make details of entries publicly available.
- 7.6. There is a procedure for removing the names of practitioners from the ERP on health or disciplinary grounds, for non-payment of fees, or by special application.

## **8. Appeals & Complaints Procedures**

- 8.1. If a NAO refuses to recommend the award of the ECP to practitioners whose training has been within a psychotherapy modality scientifically validated by the EAP and who have otherwise completed all requirements, the EWAO representing that modality should first formally request the NAO to change their practice. If the NAO does not do so, the EWAO can ask the ETSC to investigate the matter. If the NAO is found to have acted without adequate reason, the EAP may withdraw its status as a NAO.
- 8.2. Similarly, if a NAO is aware that an EWAO is not accrediting people for that modality in that country, then they should ask the EWAO to rectify the situation. If the EWAO does not do so, the NAO can ask the ETSC to investigate the matter. If the EWAO is found to have acted without adequate reason, the EAP may withdraw its status as an EWAO.
- 8.3. If an EWAO does not accredit a Training Organisation, which has been recognised by a NAO, thus preventing the trainees of that organisation from gaining the ECP, the NAO can ask the ETSC to investigate the matter. If the EWAO is found to have acted without adequate reason, the EAP may withdraw its status as an EWAO.
- 8.4. If a NAO does not recognise a Training Organisation in that country, which has been accredited by an EWAO, thus preventing the trainees of that organisation from gaining the ECP, the EWAO can ask the ETSC to investigate the matter. If the NAO is found to have acted without adequate reason, the EAP may withdraw its status as an NAO.
- 8.5. If an EWAO is aware that a NAO is not grandparenting people for that modality in that

country then they should ask the NAO to rectify the situation. If the NAO does not do so, the EWAO asks the ETSC to investigate the matter. If the NAO is found to have acted without adequate reason, the EAP may withdraw its status as an NAO.

- 8.6. Training Organisations who are members of a NAO whose courses have not been put forward for approval by the NAO can, in the absence of a relevant EWAO, appeal directly to the ETSC who will investigate the matter and may put that organisation's course forward to the Governing Board for approval, if appropriate.
- 8.7. If an Awarding or Accrediting Organisation (NAO, EWAO) has acted improperly, or has been shown to be at fault, and that this has been clearly established outside of the EAP (as in a Court of Law: an arbitration panel or review body: or by self-admission), then their status as an Awarding/Accrediting Organisation may be reviewed, suspended or removed: appropriate changes may be required to their statutes, ethics, or procedures: or their membership of the EAP may be suspended or withdrawn.
- 8.8. If a Training Organisation which awards the ECP has acted improperly or has been shown to be at fault, and that this has been clearly established outside of the EAP (as in a Court of Law; an arbitration panel or review body; or by self-admission), the EAP will first require matters to be properly investigated by the relevant NAO or EWAO (where they exist) before deciding upon any further action.
- 8.9. The suspension or withdrawal of membership of a NAO or an EWAO or the removal of approved status by the NAO or accredited status by the EWAO from a Training Organisation or a training programme will not threaten the status of any practitioner already holding the ECP.
- 8.10. If a complaint is made against a practitioner holding the ECP, it will be directed to the relevant NAO, and possibly EWAO. They must follow their published complaints procedures and deal with the complaint appropriately. If, as a result of any disciplinary process, the NAO or EWAO suspends or removes the practitioner from their Register, they immediately inform the Registrar of EAP, who will take appropriate action, which may include removal/suspension from the ERP.

## **9. Grandparenting**

- 9.1. The introduction of any new professional qualification means that the status of current practitioners needs to be recognised. This is especially important when the qualification is one whose possession could become necessary for professional privileges to be granted, as may happen with the ECP. The process of recognising practitioners who have acquired expertise through practice and not necessarily training is known as 'grandparenting'.
- 9.2. Grandparenting is based on the following principles:
  - 9.2.1. The high standards of the ECP are maintained.
  - 9.2.2. The ECP cannot be awarded to a practitioner unless a recommendation to do so is received from a NAO.
  - 9.2.3. The role of the relevant EWAO to monitor training standards within a particular modality is recognised.
  - 9.2.4. The different internal arrangements adopted by different NAOs is recognised.
  - 9.2.5. Practitioners in countries without NAOs must not be disadvantaged by the procedures for awarding the ECP.
  - 9.2.6. The practitioner does not have to submit themselves for examination, nor to undertake further training.
  - 9.2.7. The EAP retains the final authority over the award of the ECP.
- 9.3. The criteria for grandparenting are:
  - 9.3.1. A 'grandparented' practitioner has levels of skill equal or greater than to those of a practitioner trained to the standard of the ECP.

- 9.3.2. The practitioner is a member of a professional body, usually a member organisation of their NAO, and adheres to a code of ethics which is compatible with that of the EAP.
- 9.3.3. The practitioner has expertise in a modality of psychotherapy which is recognised by the EAP.
- 9.3.4. The practitioner has been in independent professional practice for a period appropriate to justify grandparenting and which is in accordance with the provision of the NAO for that country.
- 9.3.5. Practitioners who are in training, or who have recently completed a training, will not normally be considered for grandparenting, but may have their training recognised retrospectively.

## **10. Exceptions**

- 10.1. If there is no NAO, no National Umbrella Organisation, or no organisation suitable or willing to act as an NAO, a suitably qualified practitioner may receive the ECP on the recommendation of a NAO in another country so long as the practitioner becomes a member of that latter organisation and so long as that latter organisation is willing to apply the regulations of the ECP to that practitioner.
- 10.2. In the absence of an EWAO, either:
  - 10.2.1. An organisation may be recognised by the EAP to represent the modality concerned, or:
  - 10.2.2. A committee, appointed by the Governing Board, composed of 2 members of the EWOC and 2 members of the NUOC and the Registrar, or a member of the Registration Committee, shall substitute as an EWAO and act as the Grandparenting Advisory Panel (GAP). The GAP will be a sub-committee of the Governing Board.
- 10.3. In cases of doubt or complication, the EAP may require and will initiate additional independent expert or scientific comment.

## **Status**

The original ECP document was accepted at the EAP General Meeting in Rome, 1997, and revised at the EAP General Meeting in Vienna, 1999. The second version was largely the product of a Task Force mandated by the Board in February 2000. The amended document was approved by the ETSC in Paris in Oct 2000, and added to by the ETSC in Feb 2001 (Vienna). That version was accepted at the EAP General Meeting in July 2001 (Moscow).

Since then, with the development of the TAC and EAPTIs, the requirements for CPD, etc. many other minor amendments have been made. The third version was passed in Cambridge, July 2006, and since then has been amended further (in the ETSC & Board in Florence, June 2007, in Vienna, February 2008, Riga Nov 2008, and Vienna Feb 2009). Version 4.0. was passed at the EAP General Meeting (AGM) in July 2009 in Lisbon. This final version 5.0. (short amendments in terms of time scale for NAO/EWAO re-accreditations) was accepted at the AGM in July 2012 in Valencia (Spain).