

President's message

Dear EHPS members and colleagues,

Welcome to the 26th annual conference of the European Health Psychology Society which is being held in the historic city of Prague. This year's conference takes place prior to the International Congress of Behavioral Medicine in Budapest. We were all saddened by the unexpected death of Maria Kopp earlier this year. Maria Kopp was actively involved in the organisation of the congress and it is hard to come to terms with the fact that she will not be there to welcome us. She was an influential figure in the development of health psychology both in Eastern Europe and actively involved in EHPS, attending many conferences as well as serving on the EC for four years. She was elected as an EHPS Fellow in 2007 in recognition of exceptional contribution to health psychology in Europe. She will be greatly missed by her friends, family and colleagues.

The EHPS conference in Prague will be a "flagship event" that will provide researchers with the opportunity to present, and learn about, some of the very best research in European health psychology. This year's conference is likely to be one of our largest to date as it will be attended by over 800 delegates. As ever, we are indebted to the hard work of the local organisers who have ensured that preparations for the conference have run so smoothly. The success of the conference depends on many people, but special thanks are due to the Conference President, Vladimir Kezba, who has been ably supported by Lenka Kloudova from the Czech-In conference agency and Ralf Schwarzer who was our conference liaison officer. In addition, the Chair of the Scientific

Committee, Aleksandra Luszczynska, deserves a special mention for her work in processing almost 1,000 abstracts. Together with the Scientific Committee and the Track Chairs she has produced a high quality scientific programme which includes keynote presentations from Carol Ryff, Kavita Vedhara, Charles Abraham and Johan Denollet. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Create and Synergy who have organised three-day pre-conference workshops again this year. The Create workshop, facilitated by Kerry Chamberlain, is on *Qualitative Research in Perspective*, and the Synergy workshop, facilitated by Rachel Shaw and Paul Flowers, is on *Mixed Methodology in Health Psychology*. The Synergy workshop is the 10th workshop that they have organised, and this occasion will be celebrated at the conference after the Thursday poster sessions.

This year's conference marks the end of the term of the current Executive Committee of the EHPS. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the EC for their valuable contributions to the work of the society over the past two years. A number of members will be stepping down from the EC in Prague and I would like to acknowledge their impact on the society. First, the Past-President, Irina Todorova, has been the driving force behind many of the recent initiatives undertaken by the EC, most notably our recent association with the UN. In addition, she has been an invaluable source of support during my time as President and an exemplary model of how to provide calm



Paul Norman

EHPS president

leadership. Second, Holger Schmid has been Education and Training Officer for the past four years and has played a key role in the development and administration of the full range of grants that EHPS offers its members. Third, Manja Vollmann has been a central figure in the EC for six years, both as Treasurer/Membership Officer and as an Ordinary Member. Her work in building up the membership base of the society as well as ensuring the smooth administration of the society's finances cannot be underestimated.

The society is in a strong position and has seen a number of areas of growth over the past two years. First, the membership of the society reached 500 for the first time last year. This is a notable achievement and points to the relevance of EHPS as a home for researchers in health psychology both within Europe and beyond. The increased size of the membership has enabled us to invest in a wide range of initiatives to support our members. In addition to the annual conference and workshop grants, we also fund research visit grants for early career researchers (tandem, visiting scholar) as well as a Networking Grant to support colleagues from different European countries to meet to develop research ideas. The EC always welcomes suggestions from members for ways in which we can invest in other activities. For example, in response to a request from the National Delegates, the EC convened and supported a committee to consider the provision of Health Psychology Masters programmes in Europe. The increased size of the membership has also increased the administrative burden on the EC. In response to this, the EC has made a number of changes to the way in which membership applications and renewals are processed so that as many procedures as possible are automated. In addition, we have introduced electronic voting for the elections for the first time this year.

Second, the society has developed strong links with other organisations over the past two years in order to promote health psychology in Europe. First, EHPS is now associated, for an initial period of two years, with the Division of Public Information/NGO Section of the United Nations. I would like to thank our Past-President, Irina Todorova, for all her work and persistence in ensuring that our application was successful. EHPS members have already attended briefing events at the UN and the 64th Annual UN/NGO Conference in Bonn last year. Irina Todorova has formed a UN sub-committee which will be looking at ways in which we can strengthen our association. Further details of our UN association are now on our website. In addition, we have also strengthened our links with the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA). Given the close links between EFPA and the EU, this will strengthen the voice of European health psychologists and their influence on policy. For example, last year EFPA organised a conference at the European Parliament on *Psychology for Europe* which sought to highlight the importance of psychology to EU policy-making in various areas including education, work, community, transport and health. European health psychology had a strong presence at the meeting with one of our Past-Presidents, Susan Michie, presenting on the psychological principles of behaviour change and implications for policy. EFPA have organized a follow-on expert conference on *Psychology for Health – Contributions for Policy Making* in September 2012, in which health psychology will represent a core focus. Our Founding President, Stan Maes, is the Conference President. In addition, a number of EHPS members sit on the EFPA Standing Committee on Psychology and Health.

Third, the society's official journals, *Psychology & Health* and *Health Psychology Review*, have both performed strongly over the

past two years. Mark Conner and Daryl O'Connor started their term as the new Editors-in-Chief of *Psychology & Health* last year. One of their key short-term goals was to reduce the size of the publication backlog. They negotiated an increase in the number of articles published in each journal which, combined with an increase in the rejection rate, has resulted in a significant reduction in the publication lag. This means that authors' papers are now published more quickly. The Editors' longer-term goal was to increase the impact factor of the journal and increase the relative standing of the journal. We were very pleased to receive the news that the latest impact factor (2011) for *Psychology & Health* has increased to 2.126. This is the first time in the journal's history that the impact factor has been above 2.00—congratulations to the Editors for achieving this. *Health Psychology Review*, under the excellent stewardship of Martin Hagger, has quickly established itself as a key journal in the field. The journal is now included in the Social Science Citation Index and this year received its first impact factor of 2.062. This is an outstanding achievement for such a young journal and augurs well for the future. Finally, I would like to thank the current editors of *The European Health Psychologist*, Rik Crutzen and Emely de Vet, for their continued work on this publication. As a society, we are fortunate to

have such a well-produced and innovative publication that provides an outlet for societal news as well as a forum for scientific discussion.

To end on a personal note, it has been an honour to be entrusted with the Presidency of the EHPS. I will have many positive memories of the past two years; the initiatives that have come to fruition as well as the warm friendships that I have developed with members of the EC. It has been a pleasure working with such a dedicated and enthusiastic team. The results of the EC election will be announced at the Members Meeting in Prague, when the new EC will start their term of office. I wish the incoming President, Falko Sniehotta, and the new EC all the best for a productive and enjoyable two years and I look forward to working with them in my new role as Past-President.

Finally, I would like to encourage all members to attend the *EHPS Members' Meeting in Prague on Thursday 23rd August at 12.40*—your input is valued. I look forward to seeing you there.

Best Wishes,
Paul Norman
EHPS President

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