



# The European Certificate of Psychotherapy

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## Preamble

In 1991, the European Association for Psychotherapy was founded in Vienna, Austria by psychotherapy organisations in a number of European countries and from a number of different modalities within psychotherapy. It now brings together over 200 organisations, from 43 European countries, with both national organisations and European-wide organisations in many different modalities, and by that, more than 120,000 psychotherapists.

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

### **1990 Strasbourg Declaration on Psychotherapy**

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 intended for the European Economic Area (EEA), and the principle of freedom of movement of persons and services, the undersigned agree on the following points:

1. Psychotherapy is an independent scientific discipline, the practice of which represents an independent and free profession.
2. Training in psychotherapy takes place at an advanced, qualified and scientific level.
3. The multiplicity of psychotherapeutic methods is assured and guaranteed.
4. A full psychotherapeutic training covers theory, self-experience, and practice under supervision. Adequate knowledge of various psychotherapeutic processes is acquired.
5. Access to training is through various preliminary qualifications, in particular human and social sciences.

Strasbourg, October 21st, 1990

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 the highest level of training and practice.

One of the aims of the EAP has been to establish a European Certificate of Psychotherapy (hereafter, the ECP), which helps to ensure that psychotherapists are trained to the EAP's benchmark standards for independent professional practice in psychotherapy and which will help to guarantee the mobility of professional psychotherapists in Europe.

In April, 2018, EAP adopted a proposal for a **Psychotherapy Act**, which has since been submitted to the Council of Europe. If accepted, this Act will bring all EU member states into line with respect to creating an independent profession of psychotherapy in Europe.

For more information about developing European professional training standards for psychotherapy, see **Appendix**.

## **Definitions**

The Statutes of the EAP 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 § 4.1.2.2 & § 4.1.3.2. There is also mention of: "... a *register of psychotherapists who have qualified for the European Certificate of Psychotherapy*". (Statutes: § 13.1). The EAP Statutes also define the European Training Standards Committee (ETSC), the National Umbrella Organisations Committee (NUOC), the European Wide Organisations Committee (EWOC), the Training & Accreditation Committee (TAC) and the Grandparenting Advisory Panel (GAP); which are all established as sub-committees of the Governing Board (EAP Statutes: § 5.2.5). The Grandparenting Advisory Panel (GAP) is defined in this document (§ 10.2.2).

## **Documents**

The latest versions of: the 'EAP Statutes'; the 'EAP's Statement of Ethical Principles'; the 'Register of ECP holders (ECP-R)'; the 'Professional Competencies of a European Psychotherapist: Core Competencies'; the 'TAC document' (establishing the procedure for accepting EAPTIs); and this "ECP document" are the main papers of the EAP.

The 'Guidelines for Procedures and By-Laws of the EAP's Governing Board' have been accepted as an internal guideline only for all its committees & sub-committees. There are several other published 'EAP Statements' on various topics that also act as guidelines <sup>[1]</sup>, including 'EAP's Next Steps: Mapping the ECP into ECTS to gain EQF-7' <sup>[2]</sup>.

## **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/bodies within the EAP authorised by the Governing Board. In matters dealing with the European Certificate of Psychotherapy (ECP), this would usually be the European Training Standards Committee (ETSC), the Training & Accreditation Committee (TAC), and the EAP Registrar.

### **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.

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1 EAP Statements / Guidelines: [www.europsyche.org/quality-standards/eap-guidelines/](http://www.europsyche.org/quality-standards/eap-guidelines/)

2 Mapping ECP into ECTS: [www.europsyche.org/quality-standards/eap-guidelines/mapping-ecp-into-ects/](http://www.europsyche.org/quality-standards/eap-guidelines/mapping-ecp-into-ects/)

- 1.2.2. The NAO 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 and purposes of the EAP.
- 1.2.3. The NAO must be; either that country's 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, that 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, methods of applying them, and CPD requirements, all compatible with those of the EAP.
- 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.

- 1.2.4. NAOs represent psychotherapy in that country, can accredit training organisations, can recommend psychotherapists for the ECP and register them, can promote conferences and symposia, and can work towards the acceptance in their country of the definition of psychotherapy, as stated in the 1990 Strasbourg Declaration.

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

- 1.3.1. A 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 (below).
  - (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.
  - (4) It must also have internal structures similar to those in § 1.2.3.1 (above): i.e. Ethical guidelines; Disciplinary and complaints procedures; Training standards, methods of applying them and CPD requirements.
- 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 can accredit training organisations and register psychotherapists in their method or modality of psychotherapy.

#### **1.4. European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institute (EAPTI)**

- 1.4.1. Psychotherapy Training Organisations must be members in good standing of their country's NAO and of the relevant EWAO. They 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.
- 1.4.2. To be accepted as a European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institute (EAPTI) means that graduates of this organisation (or institute) can be awarded the European Certificate of Psychotherapy (ECP) directly, as their training institute has been accredited through a series of procedures outlined in the Training & Accreditation Committee (TAC) document.
- 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.
  - 1.4.3.1. If there is no NAO in place for the country and if there is no objection from the relevant EWAO, then the TAC can accredit the institute based on the experts' report (TAC: 17.4).
  - 1.4.3.2. If there is no relevant EWAO, the EWOC is asked to scrutinize the method / modality and comment on this back to the TAC (TAC: 18.2).

- 1.4.4. 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, after suitable scrutiny, are recommended for acceptance by the EAP Governing Board.
- 1.4.6. EAPTIs are re-accredited every 7 years by the TAC.
- 1.4.7. EAP encourages and recommends that EAPTIs work towards establishing their psychotherapy training courses within the European Qualifications Framework at Level 7. <sup>[3]</sup>

## **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. The ECP is awarded for life: it is a certification of a person's professional training in psychotherapy.
- 2.4. Practitioners who have been awarded the ECP are eligible to be included in the European Register of ECP Holders (hereafter the ECP-R) <sup>[4]</sup>, which 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; it must 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 (EAP Statutes: § 4.1.3.1) – which involves a process of answering the '15 Questions on Scientific Validity' to the satisfaction of EWOC – and it must have been recognised in several European countries as valid by relevant professional organisations.
- 3.4. The Core Professional Competencies have been established and each modality should conform to these.

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

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3 Each European country has a National Qualifications Framework that is aligned to the European Qualifications Framework under the Bologna Accord.

4 The previously called "European Register of Psychotherapists (ERP)" was renamed as Register of ECP Holders (ECP-R).

Within the European Higher Education Area, most countries have now adopted the ‘Bologna Process’ for academic and professional trainings, which ensures the mutual recognition of qualifications and learning periods. The EAP supports this and is encouraging its ECP training courses to align to this process.

4.1. The total duration of the psychotherapy education and training will not be less than 3200 hours:

- a) Either spread over a minimum of seven years, with the first three years being the equivalent of a relevant first (Bachelor’s) university degree and the later post-graduate component of four years must be in a training specific to psychotherapy, which will not be less than 1400 hours, and which must contain all the elements defined in § 4.2 of this document.
- b) Or conducted as a 5-year full-time academic education and professional training in psychotherapy, organised or recognised by a university, which must contain all the theoretical and practical elements defined in § 4.2 of this document.

4.2. The training meets the EAP's criteria for basic professional training, and includes the following elements:

4.2.1. **Personal Psychotherapeutic Experience.** Psychotherapists need to experience in-depth psychotherapy themselves. This total number of sessions should be not less than 250 hours, in an individual and/or group setting, normally spread over 4 years<sup>5</sup>. No single amount (above the minimum of 250 hours) is agreed by all psychotherapy methods. All trainings should 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 will practice in accordance with their specific methods. In order to enable the therapeutic process to be kept separate from the educational process, the trainee’s psychotherapist cannot also be in the role of their trainer or supervisor.

4.2.2. **Theoretical Study:** There will be a general part of university or professional training and a part, which is specific to psychotherapy. General university courses leading to a first university degree (or its equivalent) in subjects relevant to psychotherapy may be allowed as a part of, or the whole of, the general part of psychotherapy theory but these cannot contribute towards the 4 years of specific post-graduate psychotherapy training. Theoretical study (500 to 800 hours) 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 psychotherapeutic practice (not less than 300 hours) under continuous supervision (not less than 150 hours) appropriate to the psychotherapeutic modality and will be at least two years in duration.

4.2.4. These hours (above) are “direct contact” hours, which requires the presence (face-to-face or online) of a trainer, therapist or supervisor. Non-contact hours, such as preparation, personal study time, peer group work and own learning, are counted additionally.

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<sup>5</sup> A minimum of 250 hourly psychotherapy sessions over 4 years, which can be increased by including appropriate preparation, reflection and journaling time.

- 4.2.5. **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 (such as in psychiatric institutions, medical-social facilities, psycho-social support organisations etc). The placement trainee should have service management, as well as clinical supervision. The placement should last for a minimum of 125-150 hours.
- 4.3. Supervision, training and, where applicable, personal psychotherapy should be provided by practitioners whose training has met the criteria of the ECP. Advanced training processes for trainers and supervisors are not covered by these ECP criteria.
- 4.4. Training courses are required to be registered with their relevant NAO and accredited by their relevant EWAO (§ 1.4). They are then 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.
- 4.5 EAPTIs are encouraged and recommended to design and develop their psychotherapy training courses at European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Level 7. Ideally, they would register their course with the National Qualifications Framework agency or bureau in their country. Courses that are accredited by or affiliated to a university at post-graduate level would mean that their training is recognised as being at EQF Level-7.
- 4.6 **Professional Competencies:** Modules covering all the ‘core’ professional competencies, as well as competencies specific to the modality of psychotherapy training, need to be included in the EAPTI’s ECP training course. These include: ethical principles and good ethical practice; good business & commercial practices; understanding research methods and outcomes applicable to psychotherapy; etc.

## 5. Completion of Education and Training

- 5.1. By the end of the training, the trainee (now qualified as a psychotherapist practitioner) will have been able to demonstrate personal, social and professional maturity and a commitment to working to a professional code and ethical standards. They will also have to be able to demonstrate the Core Competences of a European Psychotherapist and any Specific Competences required by their modality of psychotherapy.
- 5.2. There will be an assessment of both theoretical and practical training course work; and there may be an assessment of their professional competency.
- 5.3. The practitioner being awarded the ECP should have: either completed a required university degree in human or social sciences (or the equivalent), as well as the specialised 4-years of psychotherapy training, within organisations training in the same method of psychotherapy; or should have completed a 5-year full-time academic education and training in psychotherapy, organised by a university. Both routes indicate the practitioner having reached an achievement of knowledge and skills at EQF Level 7.
- 5.4. The practitioner must also be a member of a professional psychotherapy organisation which has a binding 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 European Accredited Psychotherapy Training Institute (EAPTI) as described in § 1.4.
  - 6.2.2. By the “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 gets 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. For “Direct Award” the applicants (graduates from an EAPTI) send their completed ECP application to their EAPTI where it is checked and sent to the EAP Head office. For the Direct Award, the ECP application must contain:
    - 6.3.1.1. "Practitioner Registration Form ("PRF"), filled in and signed;
    - 6.3.1.2. ‘Curriculum Vitae for Direct Award’ (‘CV’) in English;
    - 6.3.1.3. A signature of recommendation by the EAPTI – signed ‘Notification form for Direct award’;
    - 6.3.1.4. A certificate of graduation from their EAPTI;
    - 6.3.1.5. A signature on the Strasbourg Declaration about Psychotherapy
    - 6.3.1.6. The appropriate ECP fee and their ECP-R registration fee for the first 5 years.
  - 6.3.2. For already established practitioners, the “Grandparenting procedure” applies, so the applicants send their completed ECP application to their relevant NAO where it is checked and then is sent on to the relevant EWAO. The EWAO must return the application, with an approval / objection, back to the NAO within 6 weeks, otherwise the file is presented by the NAO to the GAP, as if there is no EWAO (see § 6.2.2.2, above). For “Grandparenting”, the ECP application must contain:
    - 6.3.2.1. ‘Practitioner Registration Form’ (‘PRF’) filled in and signed;
    - 6.3.2.2. ‘Curriculum Vitae for Grandparenting’ (‘CV’) in English;
    - 6.3.2.3. A signature of recommendation by the relevant NAO and EWAO for ECP award – signed ‘Notification form for Grandparenting’;
    - 6.3.2.4. A signature on the Strasbourg Declaration about Psychotherapy;
    - 6.3.2.5. The appropriate ECP fee and their ECP-R registration fee for the first 5 years.

- 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 § 6.3.2.

## **7. Registration**

- 7.1. Individuals who have been awarded the ECP are automatically eligible to be included on the European Register of ECP Holders (ECP-R).
- 7.2. The EAP Registrar will be responsible for maintaining the European Register of ECP Holders (ECP-R) and will be responsible for recording the details of practitioners who are eligible to be on the ECP-R.
- 7.3. All ECP holders on the ECP-R are required to be a member of a suitable National or European organisation that is a member of the EAP for quality assurance, professional and ethical practice, and for Continuous Professional Development (CPD). The responsibility for checking the details of the practitioner's CPD requirements lies with the relevant NAO, and/or with the relevant EWAO, or another professional EAP member organisation.
- 7.4. The EAP will publish the ECP-R electronically on the EAP website and will make details of current ECP holders publicly available.
- 7.5. There are procedures for removing the names of ECP holders from the ECP-R on health or disciplinary grounds and for non-payment of fees.

## **8. Quality Assurance, Complaints & Appeals Procedures**

- 8.1. The EAP Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that the processes and procedures of this document are carried out, and that the quality of the ECP and the European Register of ECP holders (ECP-R) is maintained.
- 8.2. 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 NUOC to investigate the matter. If the NAO is found to have acted without adequate reason, the EAP may withdraw its status as a NAO.
- 8.3. 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 EWOC 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 an EWAO does not accredit a Training Organisation, which been recognised by a NAO, thus preventing the trainees of that organisation from gaining the ECP, the NAO can ask the EWOC to investigate the matter. If the EWAO is found to have acted without adequate reason, the EAP may withdraw its status as an EWAO.
- 8.5. 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 NUOC to investigate the matter. If the NAO is found to have acted without adequate reason, the EAP may withdraw its status as a NAO.

- 8.6. 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, then the EWAO can ask the NUOC to investigate the matter. If the NAO is found to have acted without adequate reason, the EAP may withdraw its status as a NAO.
- 8.7. Training Organisations who are members of a NAO but 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 courses forward to the Governing Board for approval, if appropriate.
- 8.8. If any 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.
- 8.9. If a Training Organisation (EAPTI) 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.
- 8.10. 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 current ECP holder.
- 8.11. If a complaint is made against an ECP holder on the ECP-R, it will be directed to the relevant NAO, and/or possibly EWAO. These organisations 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 ECP holder from their own register, they must immediately inform the EAP Registrar, who will take appropriate action, which may include removal/suspension from the ECP-R.
- 8.12. The task of the ETSC is to observe, collect and point out developments and problems in relation to the implementations of processes and procedures of this document and inform the EAP Governing Board and/or its committees.

## **9. Grandparenting**

- 9.1. The introduction of any new professional qualification means that the status of current psychotherapy 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 psychotherapy practitioners who have acquired expertise through practice and not necessarily through a specific training is known as 'grandparenting'. The grandparenting process has also been extended to include psychotherapy practitioners from countries where there has been no registration process for psychotherapists.
- 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 psychotherapy 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 are recognised.
- 9.2.5. Psychotherapy practitioners in countries without NAOs must not be disadvantaged by the procedures for awarding the ECP.
- 9.2.6. The psychotherapy 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' psychotherapy practitioner has levels of skill equal to or greater than those of a practitioner trained to the standard of the ECP.
  - 9.3.2. The psychotherapy 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 psychotherapy practitioner has expertise in a modality of psychotherapy which is recognised by the EAP.
  - 9.3.4. The psychotherapy 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. Psychotherapy 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 shall substitute for an EWAO and be called 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.

This **Version 8** of the *European Certificate for Psychotherapy document* was adopted by the EAP General Assembly in March 2023

## Appendix:

The EAP's European Certificate of Psychotherapy is currently in general alignment with **ISO/IEC 17024 (2012)**, which is an international conformity assessment: a standard or requirement that sets out criteria for an organisation's certification program for assessing and certifying the competence of individual persons in different occupations and professions. <sup>[6]</sup>

It has already been established with **ESCO** <sup>[7]</sup> that 'psychotherapist' (as a professional occupational activity) is not merely a sub-set of 'psychologist' – as was previously indicated - because its competences are substantially different from those of a clinical psychologist. Conformity with the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) will soon be sought.

EAP is also a member of **CEPLIS** <sup>[8]</sup>, equal with and parallel to the European Federation of Psychology Associations (EFPA) <sup>[9]</sup>: the association that represents European psychologists. EAP is seeking a mutual degree of recognition about the overlap of competences between the two professions.

**European Status of ECP:** The ECP is a European qualification in psychotherapy that complements national standards, however it is not (yet) a license to practice psychotherapy in any particular European country. Currently, several EU countries have passed specific 'laws' about the practice of psychotherapy in that country: some of these national laws limit entry into psychotherapy professional training only to medical doctors and psychologists or restrict people without such qualifications from practicing psychotherapy, or even (in a few countries) calling themselves a psychotherapist. These laws would also potentially exclude many professional psychotherapists from another country practicing in that country, which is against one of the 4 Principle Freedoms of the European Union: the freedom of mobility of labour.

**However**, if an ECP holder is on the professional register in one EU country (i.e. recognised as having a license to practice), then they are legally entitled to be put on the register in any other EU country, even if they don't fully satisfy all the professional requirements in that EU country. <sup>[10]</sup>

**European Psychotherapy Act:** It is hoped that a proposed "European Psychotherapy Act", submitted to the European Commission in 2018 by the EAP, will clarify many of these issues and that the ECP will then become recognised as a professional qualification in psychotherapy across all EU countries, thus enabling a much greater freedom of movement for professional psychotherapists. <sup>[11]</sup> It is therefore hoped that the ECP may develop into a "EuroPsych" pass or card: a (sort of) professional passport for European psychotherapists.

**The "Bologna Process":** To be in line with the "Bologna Process" (already adopted by 48 European countries), all academic and professional trainings are calculated using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) <sup>[12]</sup> which defines higher educational systems as having 3 main 'cycles'. These cycles incorporate the 3 higher levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The first cycle (of 3 years minimum) leads to a Bachelor's degree (EQF Level 6); the second cycle (of 2 years minimum) leads to a Master's degree (EQF Level 7); and the third cycle (3 years minimum) leads to a Doctorate (EQF Level 8).

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6 ISO/IEC 17024:2012: [www.iso.org/standard/52993.html](http://www.iso.org/standard/52993.html)

7 ESCO: European Skills, Competences, qualifications and Occupations: [www.ec.europa.eu/esco](http://www.ec.europa.eu/esco)

8 CEPLIS: European Council of Liberal Professions: [www.ceplis.org](http://www.ceplis.org)

9 EFPA: European Federation of Psychology Associations: [www.efpa.eu](http://www.efpa.eu)

10 EAP Statement on the Legal Position of Psychotherapy in Europe: [www.europsyche.org/app/uploads/2021/04/Legal-Position-of-Psychotherapy-in-Europe-2021-Final.pdf](http://www.europsyche.org/app/uploads/2021/04/Legal-Position-of-Psychotherapy-in-Europe-2021-Final.pdf)

11 [www.europsyche.org/about-psychotherapy/european-psychotherapy-act/](http://www.europsyche.org/about-psychotherapy/european-psychotherapy-act/)

12 ECTS: Each aspect (or module) of the professional training counts for a number of ECTS and the total number of ECTS gives the final 'level' of training, expressed by the levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

EAP is seeking to make the ECP conform to the Bologna Process. The ECP has always been set at a post-graduate entry level, i.e. equivalent to EQF Level 7.

**EAPTIs – PLEASE NOTE:** ECP psychotherapy trainings should now be structured using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).<sup>[13]</sup> ECTS is a credit accumulation and transfer system, usually applied to academic teaching and study, which is complemented by ECVETs – European Credits for Vocational Education & Training, the acquisition of professional skills and competences.<sup>[14]</sup>

A first (Bachelor's) degree is set at **EQF Level 6** (a minimum of 3 full-time years of tertiary education (or the equivalent) equalling **180 ECTS** (i.e. @ 60 ECTS p.a.).

People wishing to enter into an EAPTI's ECP training course (at post-graduate level) should now be formally assessed as having acquired a minimum of 180 ECTS (1<sup>st</sup> university degree) – or the equivalent (in terms of APEL & CATS)<sup>[15]</sup>.

The ECP professional psychotherapy training is now established as a post-graduate training, and is therefore at **EQF Level 7**, requiring another **120 ECTS** (= 60 ECTS p.a. full-time for 2 years, or part-time over 4 years) for the professional ECP psychotherapy training.

EAPTIs are therefore now being encouraged to 'map' their ECP training courses in terms of ECTS & ECVETS and then apply for the recognition of their training by the National Qualifications Board<sup>[16]</sup> in their own country. Contact details can be found **here** on the website of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)

For further information, see EAP Briefing Paper: "Mapping ECP into ECTS": [www.europsche.org/quality-standards/eap-guidelines/mapping-ecp-into-ects/](http://www.europsche.org/quality-standards/eap-guidelines/mapping-ecp-into-ects/)

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13 ECTS: European Credit Transfer & Accumulation System (ECTS) is a standard means for comparing academic credits in higher education. Each academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS, normally equivalent to 1500-1800 hours of total work. Each aspect (or module) of the professional training counts for a number of ECTS and the total (accumulated) number of ECTS gives the final 'level' of training, expressed by the levels of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

14 Each country calculates ECTS (and ECVET) 'hours' slightly different: 1 ECTS / ECVET = usually between 25-30 hours. These ECTS hours now include: tutor 'contact' hours **and** peer-group and individual 'study' hours; ECVET hours now include vocational 'experiential' hours (i.e. placements, volunteering, etc.) **and** professional 'training' hours (usually involving supervised practice + writing-up, preparation and reflection).

15 APEL & CATS: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) is the process where credit is sought for learning which has not previously been assessed and awarded credit by an academic institution or professional organisation. National Credit Accumulation & Transfer Systems (CATS) are used for credit transfer for courses done between higher education institutions in a particular country. This system is also part of the Bologna Process.

16 The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is now being known as 'Europass' and is active in more than 30 countries. Bureaus of the National Qualifications Framework in each European country can be found **here**. Information about Europass can be found **here**.