



Impact of the EuroPsy

A European Benchmark for Psychology Education and Training

Rosaleen McElvaney^{1,2} , Rachael McDonnell-Murray², and Ivana Marinovic³

¹Children's Health Ireland, Connolly Hospital, Blanchardstown, Dublin, Ireland

²School of Psychology, Dublin City University, Ireland

³European Federation of Psychologists Associations, Brussels, Belgium

Abstract: *Introduction:* The EuroPsy is a set of standards for education and training in psychology, overseen by the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) since 2010 and currently implemented in 28 countries across Europe. This paper examines how the EuroPsy certification process has impacted psychology in Europe. *Methods:* We reviewed data from individual countries, including annual reports, approval and reapproval applications, and minutes of annual meetings over the 13-year period from 2010 to 2023. We conducted a small number of interviews online where clarification was needed. *Results:* Three key areas have been impacted by the EuroPsy process: University psychology programmes across Europe have been revised in line with the EuroPsy curriculum; supervised practice has now been accepted as a core component of training; and many countries have revised their legislation on licensing in psychology to be consistent with the minimum standards outlined in the EuroPsy regulations. *Conclusion:* Contrary to expectations, the impact of the EuroPsy is reflected less in the number of certificates issued and more in the recognition of the certificate as a hallmark of quality, representing a benchmark that has influenced education, training, and legislation at a systemic level in European countries.

Keywords: professional psychology, training, EuroPsy, EFPA, Europe

Introduction

EuroPsy, a pillar of the European Federation of Psychologists Associations (EFPA), provides a benchmark for minimum standards for psychologists which incorporates education, professional training, supervised practice, and a commitment to ethical obligations and continuous professional development (CPD). The EuroPsy project originated in two European Union (EU) funded projects, under the Leonardo Da Vinci programme of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning programme in 1998, followed by an implementation project in 2001. The Lifelong Learning programme provided funding to projects in vocational education and training, with the aim to increase mobility, develop innovative practices, and share best practices. There were substantial and significant differences across European countries in educational requirements and standards and the professional certification requirements for practicing as a psychologist. EuroPsyT, the resulting framework, aimed to improve the overall quality of higher education and professional training in psychology, in

addition to increasing the transparency and transferability of student qualifications to facilitate student mobility across European universities and professional places of practice (Peiró & Lunt, 2002; Lunt & Peiró, 2013). It provided the foundation for what we know today as the *EuroPsy Certificate*, which has been approved in 29 countries.¹ Since its implementation in 2010, the EuroPsy Certificate has represented a significant development in professional psychology training across Europe, impacting curriculum development, training requirements, policy, and legislation in psychology. This paper presents an overview of the EuroPsy Certificate and reflects on the achievements to date² and how the EuroPsy has impacted psychology in Europe.

Mobility Movement in Europe

The mobility movement was premised upon and inspired by initiatives such as the 1957 Treaty of Rome, which declared it a basic right for European citizens to work anywhere in Europe, and the Bologna Declaration (1999), an initiative

¹ While 29 countries have approved it to date, the authority of the Russian NAC was removed in 2022 because of the expulsion of Russia as a Member Association of EFPA.

² The EuroPsy regulations were revised in 2023, representing an update in standards of education and training. This paper focuses on the period of time up to 2023, before the new regulations were introduced.

by the Ministers of Education across Europe. The declaration was signed in June 1999 by 29 Ministers, who pledged to reform their education systems to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications between different countries. The establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) supported the process of making degrees compatible and comparable in the EHEA's 48 signatory countries (Kushnir, 2016). It aimed to create an effective EHEA through three major strands: (1) creating a common degree structure, based on three consecutive cycles: the undergraduate cycle lasting 3 years, followed by a graduate cycle of a 2-year master's degree, followed by doctorate degrees; (2) supporting mobility through the use of the European Credit System (ECTS); and (3) enhancing the European dimension in higher education by emphasizing European quality assurance.

The Bologna process was operationalized through the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe project, detailing how higher educational institutions adopted a system of detailed benchmark statements for major subjects, whereby degrees could be readily understandable and comparable across countries (González & Wagenaar, 2003). Lunt and colleagues (2011) used this Tuning project as an opportunity to develop the Tuning-EuroPsy, "a reference point for the design and delivery of degree programmes in psychology" (Lunt et al., 2014, p. 72). In parallel to the Bologna process, various European Union countries issued directives between 1985 and 2005 to support the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and facilitate mobility. Limited progress was made because each country could impose its requirements on psychologists who had engaged in different pathways toward qualification.

The EuroPsy Certificate

The EuroPsy certification process was endorsed by the EFPA General Assembly in 2005, providing a broad framework for training professional psychologists in Europe (Lunt, 2011). The practicalities of the EuroPsy were tested out in a pilot project, the "experimental garden" project, which involved six different countries implementing the EuroPsy in "real-life" national contexts during 2006–2009. Following the pilot, a European Awarding Committee (EAC) was established to oversee the project, the role of which is to evaluate applications from Member Associations (MAs) for recognition of National Awarding Committees (NACs) as well as to evaluate applications and award individual EuroPsy Certificates. Chairs of NACs meet

annually to facilitate collaboration, share practice, discuss challenges, offer support with influencing policy and legislative change, and maintain the quality of the EuroPsy standards. The EAC was accountable to the Executive Committee (EC) of EFPA through a EuroPsy Coordination Group (ECG), comprising the EAC chair, the EFPA president, and the EC liaison for the EuroPsy. The EAC delegates authority to NACs in each MA country to implement the EuroPsy certification process. An online register of EuroPsy Certificate holders is held by EFPA.

Similarly, the Specialist European Awarding Committees (S-EACs), responsible for the overview of the implementation of Specialist Certificates, delegate authority to Specialist National Awarding Committees (S-NACs) to implement the EuroPsy Specialist Certificate within their country. At the time of writing, there are three Specialist Certificates – psychotherapy, work and organizational psychology, and sports psychology. The Specialist Certificate in work and organizational psychology was developed jointly by EFPA and the European Association of Work and Organisational Psychology. All certification processes are outlined in the EuroPsy regulations (www.europsy.eu), which are updated regularly through MA votes at a biannual General Assembly.

The EuroPsy standard requires a 5-year university education in psychology with a recognized curriculum outlined in the EuroPsy regulations (www.europsy.eu). The minimum requirements for a bachelor's degree must include: orientation to psychology, subdisciplines and areas of activity, theoretical courses and practical skills, and academic skills (min 125 ECTs); methodology; and non-psychology-related theory (min 45 ECTs).³ Minimum requirements for the master's degree or equivalent must include: theoretical courses, seminars and assignments (min 60 ECTs); an internship or placement; and a research project or thesis (min 30 ECTs). The final part of the training pathway includes 1 year of supervised practice in a recognized setting appropriate to a specific field of psychology practice (e.g., clinical/health, work and organization, education) (min ECTs 60) and a commitment to the EFPA ethics metacode (see www.efpa.eu).⁴ A key aspect of the EuroPsy framework is a commitment to developing and assessing professional competencies and an emphasis on an "input" (curriculum and knowledge) and "output" (practice and competencies) training model. There are transitional arrangements for experienced psychologists who can demonstrate their competencies based on years of experience and engagement in continuous professional development (CPD). The EuroPsy Certificate is valid for 7 years, after which the holder undertakes revalidation and must provide evidence of

³ As of 2023, the undergraduate requirements include a 4-week practicum in psychology.

⁴ Each MA of EFPA is obliged to abide by the EFPA metacode of ethics and requires EuroPsy applicants to declare their commitment to adhere to this code of ethics in their practice.

engagement in CPD to demonstrate how competencies have been maintained and developed. Criteria for the Specialist Certificates include completion of specialized postgraduate training and education (90 ECTs, minimum 400 hours), at least 3 years of postgraduate supervised practice (500 hours), and supervision, peer consultation, and mentoring (150 hours). At the time of writing, a pilot project to test the feasibility of a fourth Specialist Certificate – in clinical neuropsychology – is underway.

As Bartram and Roe (2005) outlined, knowledge and skills are largely domain-specific, and competencies are context-dependent, depending on the field of practice. There are currently four recognized fields of practice in the basic EuroPsy Certificate: clinical and health psychology, work and organizational psychology, educational psychology, and sports psychology. For psychologists who work in other fields of psychology, a category “other” is available. The concept of “field of practice” represents a compromise reached between countries in which the basic level of practice is a generalist one and countries in which a specialization pathway is taken within the 5 years of education, followed by 1 year of supervised practice in a specialism of psychology. The field of practice, in EuroPsy terms, does not represent a specialization but rather the initial level of entry to professional practice, incorporating a year of supervised practice in a specific field of practice. In line with a growing recognition of the need for a competency-based framework for training in professional psychology (Fouad et al., 2009; Kaslow et al., 2007; Rubin et al., 2007; Schulte et al., 2009), the EuroPsy framework outlined 20 competencies any psychologist should be able to demonstrate, grouped into the following six categories: goal specification (needs analysis and goal-setting); assessment (individual, group, organizational and situational); development/design (definition and analysis, service design, testing and evaluation); intervention (direct person-oriented, direct situation-oriented, indirect and service/product implementation); evaluation (analysis, measurement and planning); and communication (giving feedback and communication). These primary competencies are complemented by eight enabling competencies: professional strategy, continuing professional development, professional relations, research and development, marketing and sales, account management, practice management, quality assurance, and self-reflection.⁵ Training programmes must be designed to teach and develop these competencies in individuals. A working group was established in 2019 to review the EuroPsy competencies, training standards, and CPD standards. This work, completed in 2023, has resulted in some

changes to the EuroPsy regulations and a reformulation of the competencies (see www.efpa.eu for the current version of EuroPsy regulations).

EuroPsy Implementation

The first NACs were formally established in 2010, following the experimental garden project involving six countries: Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Spain, and the UK. By 2013, 20 European countries had NACs (Lunt et al., 2014). At the time of writing, 28 countries have approved issuing the EuroPsy Certificate.⁶ Since 2010, there have been major developments in several European countries in improving standards of psychology education and training as well as developing policy and legislation regulating the profession and practice of psychology. It is worth considering the role of EuroPsy in those developments. The EuroPsy was born out of the perceived need for a common standard of professional training across Europe, operationalized by issuing the EuroPsy Certificate. However, the acceptance of the EuroPsy Certificate by individual psychologists across Europe tells us little about the impact of the EuroPsy. EFPA represents 37 member associations representing 350,000 psychologists across Europe. Yet by 2020, only 15,623 basic EuroPsy Certificates and 2,323 Specialist Certificates had been issued. In 2011, there was an exceptionally high application rate for the EuroPsy in Spain, because of an upsurge in interest among Spanish psychologists for the Specialist Certificate for psychologists specializing in psychotherapy. However, when these certificates came up for renewal, only half of these psychologists applied. It would appear that the existence of the certificate and the accompanying standards for education and training – rather than the holding of the certificate – is what is attractive to many psychologists and psychological associations.

In recognition of this development, in 2020, the authors began a methodical review to capture how the EuroPsy has impacted the profession of psychology in Europe over the previous decade. This paper focuses on three key dimensions of this impact: the impact on curriculum development, the development of supervised practice as a key component of professional training in psychology, and legislation.

Method

We gathered data from several sources. First, the three authors independently reviewed annual reports submitted up to 2020 from the NAC and the S-NAC of each member

⁵ These primary and enabling competencies have been updated as functional and foundational competencies in 2023. See https://www.europsy.eu/_webdata/europsy_regulations_july_2023_ga_brighton.pdf.

⁶ Because of various circumstances, only 22 of these are currently operational.

association with the key research question in mind: What was the impact of the EuroPsy in countries in which it has been implemented? Annual reports from each country present data on the activity of the NAC (number and frequency of meetings); the number of certificates issued; details of programmes that adhere to the EuroPsy requirements; arrangements for supervised practice, supervision training, and continuing professional development; main activities undertaken in the previous year to promote and develop the EuroPsy; and plans for future development. Each author identified areas of impact, and we reached a consensus about the three key areas of impact: curriculum, supervised practice, and policy and legislation. We then reviewed further material to obtain more detailed information on these three areas of impact: approval and reapproval applications and minutes of annual meetings attended by NAC and S-NAC chairs. The research team agreed on illustrative vignettes as best representing the key areas of impact identified, and we conducted individual interviews with a small number of EAC and NAC members to elicit more in-depth data on these illustrative vignettes. These vignettes reflect how the EuroPsy influenced developments in the three realms identified above.

Impact of the EuroPsy

At the time of writing, the 28 member associations of EFPA with delegated authority to issue the EuroPsy Certificate are Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, and United Kingdom. As noted above, 15,623 Basic Certificates have been issued since 2010. Specialist certificates in psychotherapy are currently implemented in Spain, Turkey, Finland, and Portugal, and Specialist Certificates in work and organizational psychology are implemented in Norway, Finland, and Spain. In 2023, a Specialist Certificate in sports psychology was approved, while a pilot project on clinical neuropsychology began in 2022.

Impact on Curriculum Development

While the Bologna Declaration (1999) laid the foundation for the European educational standard of a bachelor's degree followed by a master's degree, significant variation remained within psychology concerning the minimum requirements for entry into the profession. The EFPA, through the EuroPsy regulations, stipulated the minimum standard of 5 years of education to the master's level and 1 year of supervised practice to independently practice as

a professional psychologist. Across Europe, the EuroPsy standards, as outlined in the EuroPsy regulations (EFPA, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021), have been used by professional bodies and universities to influence changes in curriculum development by bringing their educational curricula in line with EuroPsy standards and competencies. NACs regularly report on their engagement with universities in promoting EuroPsy, thus raising awareness of the core competencies of professional psychologists and encouraging universities to adhere to EuroPsy standards.

The professional body for psychologists in Spain, The Colegio Oficiales de Psicólogos (COP), is the competent authority authorized to issue a license to practice psychology. Thus, psychologists practicing in Spain are required to be members of COP. The COP, a Member Association of EFPA, has used the EuroPsy standards as the benchmark for evaluating the content of psychology education programs in Spain. Major changes in education curriculum development took place in Spain between 2010 and 2013 following the introduction of the Bologna Project. According to the Chair of the NAC in Spain, Jose Ramos, during this time, the EuroPsy's standards were used to inform curriculum content and evaluate the new undergraduate university system across Spain. Following the establishment of the NAC in Spain in 2010, all university representatives were informed of the EuroPsy standards and asked to use them to assess the internship component of their psychology degree. Presentations were held across universities, promoting the EuroPsy Certificate to students – the psychologists of tomorrow.

Greater challenges exist for countries implementing the EuroPsy in which there is a wider gap between national educational standards and the EuroPsy standards. For example, in Poland, 50 institutions initially did not adhere to the EuroPsy standards when developing the NAC. The challenge for the NAC in Poland was to promote the EuroPsy standards to universities, encouraging them to align their curricula. The NAC in Poland introduced an initiative whereby a certificate of consistency was issued to universities that provided evidence of their curriculum adhering to EuroPsy standards. 12 programmes to date have successfully completed the process. These universities use this certificate to promote their programmes and attract students to their universities. Graduates from such programmes have met the educational criteria for eligibility for the EuroPsy Certificate but still need to complete the 1-year supervised practice before applying for the certificate. The EuroPsy Certificate is offered at a reduced cost to graduates from such programmes.

Examples of how the EuroPsy has impacted education curricula can also be seen in the Czech Republic and Lithuania. In the Czech Republic, the Higher Education Act from May 2016 changed the system of accreditation of higher

education study programmes. The Czech Republic NAC addressed The National Accreditation Office and successfully appealed for the national accreditation standards to continue to be aligned with EuroPsy regulations. In Lithuania, the national association is involved in developing a detailed description of EuroPsy competencies for the different fields of psychology (clinical and health, educational, work and organizational). They completed an audit of all national psychology programmes and shared recommendations with universities, all of which changed their programmes to align with the EuroPsy standards.

Impact on Supervised Practice

The emphasis within the Bologna Declaration (1999) of promoting a “competence” approach to evaluating professional practice was a key pillar of the EuroPsy and has been fundamental in outlining specific competencies for the practice of psychology and in the evaluation of such competencies (Bartram & Roe, 2005). This emphasis on competencies enabled the Colegio in Spain to develop supervision training workshops for potential supervisors that focused specifically on evaluating supervisees’ competencies in line with the EuroPsy regulations. Similarly, the national competent authority in Portugal, the Ordem dos Psicólogos Portugueses (OPP), developed guidelines for supervisors, using the EuroPsy standards as its benchmark for evaluating competencies for practice as a psychologist.

In promoting best practice, developments in supervision training and supervision standards arguably demonstrate the area where EuroPsy has had the most impact, particularly for those countries in which this was not well developed. Building on earlier work on developing a mentoring network that included education for both mentors and students (Podlesek & Zabukovec, 2012), in 2015-2016, the Slovenian Psychological Association secured a grant to design a training programme for supervisors to develop supervisor competency and to facilitate the standardization and engagement of supervision practice for psychologists across Slovenia. The programme was designed in collaboration with the Norwegian Psychological Association and was premised on the EuroPsy standards for supervised practice. This training for supervisors involved educational workshops, engagement in supervisor group discussions, and reflections on case examples. A book documenting the development of supervision practice describes this process in detail (Podlesek, 2018). In total, 24 supervisors received training. Moving the programme online is now being considered to make it more accessible and increase the uptake of the training across Slovenia. This initiative highlights the benefit of being part of the network of countries involved in the EuroPsy project and showcases the transfer of knowledge from one European country, which has a more

established path of supervisor training and practice, to facilitate the establishment of a training model in another European country.

There is currently a mentorship framework in Slovenia that psychologists working in different fields of practice must complete before undertaking a state exam. Thus, it is now a requirement to complete supervised practice to qualify as a psychologist: 6 months in healthcare, 10 months in psychology in education, and 9 months in social welfare. Each government department issues rules on traineeships and professional examinations, and the traineeship must be completed before the individual candidate can undertake the state examination. While these national standards do not yet align with the EuroPsy standards, which require 1-year supervised practice for all fields of practice, the Slovenian NAC has been able to use the EuroPsy standards in their deliberations with government departments.

Within psychology, the once-held presumption that the competence to provide supervision is sufficiently based on years of practice has been largely discarded with the awareness that, without formal training, this could result in ineffective supervision and poor practice (Louie, 2004; Falender & Shafranske, 2017). Across many European countries, initiatives to provide supervisor training have underpinned the implementation of EuroPsy. In France, supervision training on EuroPsy standards was offered in Amiens, Nantes, and Montpellier. Discussions of expanding these to Paris have also taken place. Feedback from supervisors and supervisees included their satisfaction with the development of professional reflexivity, identity, and confidence. EuroPsy also impacted supervision, standards of practice, and the promotion of training in Croatia, Poland, Lithuania, and Germany. In Croatia, the Croatian Psychological Chamber developed a new programme for supervised practice based on the EuroPsy standards and presented it at the Annual Conference of Psychology in 2019. The NAC in Lithuania, as noted above, has been working on a detailed description of EuroPsy competencies for the different fields of psychology practice and has developed a training programme for supervisors; their focus and dedication to providing training for supervisors has been ongoing for many years. The Norwegian Psychological Association provides 1-day workshops on competency-based supervision in the larger cities in Norway. In Germany, supervisor training courses are under review to incorporate EuroPsy standards into existing programmes. Similarly, there are efforts by the Estonian NAC to tighten national requirements of supervisors in clinical practice; in Cyprus, the NAC is developing supervision training programmes specifically addressing the EuroPsy competencies.

While the EuroPsy standards for supervised practice refer to the period of training, the necessity for supervision throughout the career of psychologists has been discussed

extensively in the supervision literature (e.g., Hawkins & McMahan, 2020; Kaslow et al., 2012). Engagement in continuing professional development is a requirement for renewing the EuroPsy Certificate. Furthermore, supervision is an integral requirement for the EuroPsy Specialist Certificates, for which applicants must first have received of be eligible for the EuroPsy Basic Certificate. There was limited reference in the NAC annual reports regarding how these standards have impacted promoting supervision as a career-long activity. Whether EuroPsy standards will contribute to this development remains to be seen.

The clear articulation of functional and enabling competencies in the EuroPsy framework provided a roadmap for students, trainers, and supervisors through operationally defining performance benchmarks and minimum standards that can be evaluated (Hatcher et al., 2013; Price et al., 2017). The International Project on Competence in Psychology (IPCP) used the EuroPsy competency standards to inform the development of an international competency framework, in collaboration with the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards in the United States and Canada. A shared view on this framework is essential for the quality assurance of psychology training globally. The revised EuroPsy standards have retained the focus on competencies but use Rodolfa et al.'s (2005) cube model of competencies to elaborate on the range of competencies required by psychologists.

Impact on Policy and Legislation

Regulatory approaches in psychology differ largely across Europe, with the range of reserved activities fluctuating from a generic scope of activities in the overall field of psychology to specific activities associated with subspecialisms within psychology (European Commission (EC), 2016). In addition, there is a distinction between legislation that protects the title of psychologist, i.e., that individuals may not use the title unless they hold specific qualifications, and legislation that protects the practice of psychology, i.e., only psychologists can perform specific tasks. Furthermore, regulating bodies also vary greatly. In some countries (e.g., Portugal), the professional psychology organization is the competent authority and has the legal authority and responsibility to regulate psychologists. Psychologists in Portugal must be registered with the Ordem (OPP) to work as a psychologist. As a Member Association (MA) of EFPA, the Ordem took responsibility for establishing an NAC in Portugal. In other countries, a statutory body (e.g., Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) in the United Kingdom) regulates the practice of psychologists, while

the professional body (e.g., British Psychological Society), as an MA of EFPA, initiates the establishment of the NAC. According to the European Commission in 2016⁷, 11 countries (Austria, Belgium, Estonia, France, Hungary, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and The United Kingdom) recognized and legally protected the title of psychologist but did not protect the practice of psychologists; eight countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Spain) did not regulate the title of psychologist but did recognize the practice of psychology; seven countries (Ireland, Malta, Romania, Germany, Bulgaria, Latvia and Luxembourg) regulated neither the title of psychologist nor the practice, while three countries (Finland, Iceland, and Poland) provided legal protection for both the title and the activities of psychologists (European Commission, 2016). However, these figures do not capture the nuances within these countries. For example, in Spain, the title of psychologist is protected for two specialties (general health psychologist and clinical psychologist), while a license is required by law to practice as a psychologist. In the UK, the title of psychologists qualified in subspecialisms is protected, i.e., “practitioner psychologist” and “registered psychologist,” such as “counseling psychologist” and “forensic psychologist.” However, the title of “psychologist” is not protected, nor is the practice of psychology. In Germany, while the title of psychologist is not recognized by law, since 1985 it is protected by a case decision of the Federal Court of Germany (<https://www.europsy.eu/national-requirements>). Such discrepancies in the protection of the title and activities of psychologists across the different countries in Europe provide clear evidence of the heterogeneity of how psychology is regulated and the need for more consistent regulation of both the title and practice of psychology in Europe (Karayianni, 2018; Van Broeck & Lietaer 2008).

EuroPsy has had a significant influence on establishing legislation for practice of psychology in Portugal and has been the premise of policies governing the profession's responsibilities. In 2001, a nonprofit organization (Pro Order Association) was established with the main goal of establishing a board that would have the legal power to regulate psychology practice in Portugal. As mentioned, the Ordem dos Psicólogos (OPP) is now the regulating body in Portugal and is responsible for the public registry of psychologists practicing in the country, professional training, and developing the profession. While an NAC was not established in Portugal until 2014, EuroPsy played an important role in advocating for the statutory training standards within Portugal to align with European standards. Furthermore, close liaison between EFPA and the NAC in Spain enabled them to use the EuroPsy published materials

⁷ This report is based on a survey conducted in 2013 and does not reflect the current regulatory status of psychology across Europe. A working group in EFPA recently sought to capture the current landscape, which will hopefully be published in the near future.

on the standards and competencies of psychologists to lobby parliament. Their proposals to the government on what the training pathway should entail for psychologists stemmed directly from the EuroPsy's competency model and framework.

In Croatia, a new law for the practice of psychology was introduced in 2003 and revised in 2021, harmonizing regulations and standards with EuroPsy standards. Criteria for CPD were also adjusted. Thus, in Croatia, applicants for the EuroPsy Certificate are automatically eligible based on their education and training standards as outlined in the Croatian legislation.

In many countries, NAC members or those involved in the EuroPsy project have presented information on the EuroPsy to the bodies responsible for developing regulations and legislation for the profession of psychology. In Slovenia, the NAC participated in a meeting with the National Institute of Public Health regarding the competencies of psychologists working in healthcare and presented the EuroPsy standards to the authorities upgrading the mental healthcare system in Slovenia according to the National Resolution on Mental Health, accepted in 2018. Similarly, in Turkey, the Turkish Psychological Association (TPA) has presented a report to the Minister for Health drawing on the EuroPsy standards to inform the process of protecting the title of clinical psychologist, while in Ireland, the chair of the EAC presented the EuroPsy regulations to the Psychologists Registration Board, which is preparing procedures for the introduction of statutory registration for psychologists in Ireland.

Finally, in 2015, the Belgian Federation of Psychologists used the EuroPsy standards in their submissions to the government to prepare the foundations for introducing legislation on mental healthcare professions. According to Professor Nady van Broeck, chair of the Belgian Federal Council of the Mental Health Care Professions and also chair of the Specialist European Awarding Committee for psychologists specializing in psychotherapy, the EuroPsy standards were critical in the addition of the legal requirement of 1 year of supervised professional practice to obtain the federal license to practice and the regional accreditation as a clinical psychologist. The EuroPsy Specialist Certificate for psychologists specialized in psychotherapy also influenced the legal regulation of the delivery of psychotherapeutic services and informed the legal requirements for training as a psychologist specializing in psychotherapy in Belgium.

Challenges for the Future

The aim of this paper was to explore the impact of the EuroPsy since the publication of the regulations in 2011.

It is important to document the activities and progression of projects across Europe to identify remaining challenges and share knowledge and experience internationally. The EuroPsy provides additional recognition for individual psychologists' qualifications and training. Universities use the EuroPsy to guide curriculum development. Professional psychology associations offer the EuroPsy as a member benefit to those who wish to embrace their identity as European psychologists. International psychology associations and competent authorities that regulate psychology in other parts of the world have shown an interest in the EuroPsy. This article highlights three key areas where the impact appears to be most marked: curriculum development, supervised practice, and legislation and policy. The EuroPsy standards have been used as a benchmark for improving education and training, aligning psychology curricula across Europe, increasing awareness of the importance of supervision engagement and training, and influencing legislation and policy governing both the title and the practice of psychology across Europe.

An increasing number of countries now regulate the title of psychologist and psychology practice by law. The EuroPsy standards have been incorporated into national legislation because of the efforts made by professional bodies to liaise with government ministries to make the EuroPsy standards known. Enshrinement in legislation ensures that those practicing psychology possess sufficient skills and competencies to provide a quality service and ensure protection for the public accessing the service (Bartram & Roe, 2005). In countries in which the competent authority is – or involves – the representative body for psychologists in that country (e.g., in Spain and Portugal), the EuroPsy has provided an agreed set of standards. Where psychology is not legally regulated, professional psychological associations have used the EuroPsy standards to educate and lobby government departments to implement educational curricula and training pathways in line with the EuroPsy standards.

However, the first decade of the EuroPsy has had its challenges. Adherence to the EFPA metacode of ethics is a core eligibility criterion for the EuroPsy Certificate. Where psychologists are not in a Member Association (MA) of EFPA, they must sign a declaration permitting the MA to adjudicate on ensuing ethical matters. However, in some countries (e.g., France), the professional body is legally prohibited from investigating a complaint made against a nonmember of that association. The spirit of the EuroPsy to be inclusive – and to ensure that eligibility is not confined to those psychologists who are members of professional bodies – has proved challenging when faced with complaints about ethical breaches. In addition, the European Awarding Committee has no jurisdiction over individual EuroPsy psychologists. Yet alleged breaches of ethical

codes must be investigated. In 2023, the regulations were changed to allow the removal of a psychologist from the register if they did not agree to complaints being adjudicated by the relevant regulatory authority for psychologists in that country. The question of how to address professional misconduct in countries in which psychology is not regulated and professional bodies have no legal mandate to investigate breaches of ethical codes remains an important issue for EFPA to address.

Supervised practice, while identified here as a key achievement, remains a challenge for many countries in which this is not a requirement by law. The availability of supervisors is an issue, with little or no training opportunities available in those countries to upskill potential supervisors. Access to online supervision training courses can hopefully assist in this development. However, in the absence of national requirements or regulations, it has proved challenging to motivate psychologists to engage in supervision training provided by EFPA, whether nationally, in person, or online. In addition, motivating psychologists to engage in supervision is challenging when the burden of financing such supervision rests with the psychologists themselves.

The incorporation of continuous professional development (CPD) as a foundational competency is now well embedded in the EuroPsy certification process. However, even in many countries in which the title or practice of psychology is regulated, a minimum commitment to CPD is not always required. Thus, the responsibility of maintaining knowledge and skills through engagement in studying, further training, supervision, and research as well as documenting these activities rests primarily with the individual psychologist. EFPA has provided support to MAs in developing evaluation mechanisms for monitoring individual EuroPsy Certificate holders' CPD records, but this is still in its infancy, as evidenced in recent years as NACs engaged in the process of revalidating EuroPsy Certificates following the initial 7-year certification period. Nevertheless, the CPD requirement for revalidation of the EuroPsy Certificate and the acknowledgment that maintaining competencies requires engagement in ongoing lifelong learning sends a strong message to the psychology community that these are integral to good quality practice.

The EuroPsy Basic Certificate allows for identifying fields of practice – clinical/health psychology, educational psychology, work and organizational psychology, and since 2023, sports psychology. The “other” category may be used to identify a designated field of practice, such as community psychology. The continuing diversity in education and training systems across European countries has challenged EFPA as an organization to give due recognition to psychologists who represent diverse fields of practice. This is particularly pertinent to countries in which the pathway to

practitioner psychologist status focuses on a specific field of practice at the master's level (e.g., forensic psychology), as opposed to a generic pathway. Efforts to extend the number of specified fields of practice will likely be in demand in the coming years in the EFPA community.

Similarly, in some instances, the expansion of Specialist Certificates has been hampered by differing interpretations of the meaning of specialisms. In some countries, specialism occurs at an early stage of professional development. However, the EuroPsy specialist education and training requirements stipulate advanced theoretical, skills training, and professional practice requirements in addition to those completed as part of the basic EuroPsy eligibility criteria. Entrants to postgraduate education programmes in these specialisms are often not already qualified psychologist practitioners; rather, these programmes are considered a pathway to such qualifications. Thus, psychologists whose training pathway began, for example, in sports psychology or educational psychology, and who have practiced in this field for several decades may not meet the eligibility criteria for a Specialist Certificate without engaging in further education and training. Yet such training opportunities at the postqualification level are limited.

NACs and SNACs have expended considerable efforts in promoting the EuroPsy in recent years, and ideas for such promotion are shared each year at the Chairs Meeting. We need to consider how the EFPA and member associations can further promote the EuroPsy among a range of target groups. Liaison with the European Federation of Psychology Students' Associations and presentations at their conferences has served to inform students of the EuroPsy, while member associations have used their annual conferences and European conferences as a platform to raise awareness of the EuroPsy initiative.

Finally, the introduction of regulations on data protection led to a revision of what information can be legally held in the register and how these data are managed. Including European countries in the EFPA family, where that country is not a member of the EU, means directing particular attention to ensuring that the NACs are abiding by GDPR. The online EuroPsy register has been a financially expensive initiative, and mechanisms for sharing information online between member associations proved complex. While an essential resource for the public in searching for EuroPsy psychologists in their area, the EFPA may need to consider where to allocate resources informed by where the EuroPsy has the most impact.

The original objectives of the working group on the EuroPsy were to promote transparency, quality of training and practice, stimulate mobility in study and work by facilitating recognition of qualifications in different countries in which EuroPsy is issued, and foster the development of the profession through supporting educators and trainers to

improve standards and share best practice (Lunt et al., 2014). Although there is much work to be done in the next decade, and much scope for expansion and progression, the impact of the EuroPsy in raising standards for both practice and supervision is a significant achievement for the profession of psychology in Europe.

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Open Science

Data used for this study is not publicly available but held within EFPA. It is the hope that in future, such data can be shared publicly.

ORCID

Rosaleen McElvaney

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0204-7270>

Dr. Rosaleen McElvaney

Children's Health Ireland

Connolly Hospital

Blanchardstown

Dublin 15

Ireland

rosaleen.mcelvaney@dcu.ie