

29 February 2024

Open letter from European Presidents to the President of the IPA

We begin by stating that we esteem the hard work that the Task force 2 has done and we wish to acknowledge that the colleagues who did this work integrated some of our recommendations on the work of Task force 1. However we wish to communicate the following statement:

We, members of the IPA and presidents of psychoanalytic societies that are part of the IPA, the signatories of this open letter, wish to express our concern about the future of psychoanalysis as it is influenced by the latest IPA projects. Furthermore we express our **opposition to some of the recommendations of the TaskForce II report.**

To summarise, although the review cites evidence that some analysts (who have tried using “teleanalysis” with analysis in person) believe it is more possible than they or others expected:

1. It does not differentiate between different ways of practicing psychoanalysis, assuming that they are all equally amenable to “combined” work. This assumption is dangerous and could be very consequential.
2. It does not distinguish or provide evidence as to the the impact of “teleanalysis” on ordinary psychoanalytic treatment **from a psychoanalysis agreed to be sufficient as a foundation for becoming a psychoanalyst**, nor explore the institutional and other implications. This is a subject of its own.
3. It does not clarify or provide evidence as to whether the future intention is for candidates to use “combined analysis” for their control cases or the implications that would follow for their future. Again a crucial subject.

The IPA was created by Freud in 1910 to preserve psychoanalysis from potential abuses and to maintain the quality of psychoanalysts' training. We expect the IPA to continue this task and focus on defining the **optimum** not the minimum criteria for psychoanalytic experience in the context of psychoanalytic training.

We consider it was an important step forward in 2007, when three different and distinguishable models of psychoanalytic training were recognised within the

IPA. These were three distinct paths, each with its own coherence in its mission of transmitting psychoanalysis, training psychoanalysts and scientific research responding to the Freudian and post Freudian project of defining psychoanalysis as a clinical procedure, theory and research method for the investigation of mental processes. Based on reviewing the evidence in the report, we consider that the TF II report does not support its recommendations and that those recommendations **compromise the vitality and future of the IPA.**

For us the introduction of the possibility of "teleanalysis" in the Procedural Code implies de facto the recognition of "teleanalysis" as constituting psychoanalytical work equivalent to that of the psychoanalytical work hitherto recognized and protected by the IPA, i.e. as a meeting in-person between the two protagonists, patient and analyst in the same room proceeding along the lines of Freud's definitions. We consider that the TF2 proposal to define a mixture of "teleanalysis" and in-person analysis as "combined analysis" introduces a **profound change in our method which transforms the very nature of psychoanalysis** as defined by Freud as a means of discovering unconscious drive processes. Consequently, our view is that the recommendations of Task Force II constitute for us **a dangerous drift that inexorably threatens:**

- **the quality of the analysts trained in this way,**
- **their ability to transmit psychoanalysis in turn,**
- **compromises the fundamentals of metapsychology.**

This proposed mode of training no longer ensures any of the rigors of each model that has been accepted until now and claims a psychoanalytic equivalence between remote sessions and in-person sessions. In opposition to this we would like to reaffirm a **fundamental position** concerning the analytic treatment and the deepening of psychoanalytic science – Freudian metapsychology - **which we ask the IPA, of which we are members, to defend.**

Accordingly, the signatories request that

- **The term "combined psychoanalysis" should not be used.**
- **A statement by the Board of the IPA providing an unambiguous definition of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic training which reaffirms that a psychoanalytic treatment for training takes place at least three or four times a week according to one of the three models of training and with two people present bodily in the same room.**

- **Exceptional practices such as “teleanalysis” in remote or deprived regions or where IPA societies argue the need for it should only be employed in exceptional circumstances (as happened in Eastern Europe) and should be handled specifically by a group the IPA has charged to do it responsibly, thoughtfully and transparently.**
- **References to exceptional circumstances should not be included in the rules governing ordinary training methods recognized by the IPA. The principal objective should be to assure quality and exceptionality cannot be the rule.**

SIGNATORIES : Presidents of European Societies

Belgian Psychoanalytical Society, Marc Hebbrecht; British Psychoanalytical Society, Vic Sedlak; Bulgarian Psychoanalytic Society, Dimo Stantchev; Czech Psychoanalytical Society; Mar6n Mahler; Danish Psychoanalytical Society, Asbjørn Pedersen; Estonian-Latvian Psychoanalytical Society, Endel Talvik; Finnish Psycho-Analytical Society, Anneli Larmo; French Psychoanalytical Association, Dominique Suchet; German Psychoanalytical Society, Eckehard Pioch; Hellenic Psychoanalytical Society Christos Zervis; Hungarian Psychoanalytical Society, Ágoston Schmelowszky; Istanbul psychoanalytical Association, Göver Kazancioglu; Istanbul Psychoanalytic Association for Training, Research and Development (Psike Istanbul), Nilüfer Erdem; Italian Psychoanalytical Association, Geni Valle; Italian psychoanalytical Society, Saran6s Thanopulos; Lebanese Association for the development of psychoanalysis, Maurice Khoury; Moscow Psychanalytical Society, Vitaly Zimin; Moscow Group of Psychoanalysts, Oleg Levin; Paris Psychoanalytical Society, Emmanuelle Chervet; Polish Psychoanalytic Society, Piotr Dworczyk; Portuguese Nucleus of Psychoanalysis, Raquel C. Ferreira; Psychoanalytical Society of Research and Training, Jean-Philippe Gueguen and Anna Dal Mas; Psychoanalytical Society of Serbia, Marija

Vezmar; **Romanian Society of Psychoanalysis**, Bogdan Sebas6an Cuc; **South African Psychoanalytical Association**, Mary-Anne Smith; **Swedish Psychoanalytical Association**, Alexandra Billinghamurst; **Swiss Society of psychoanalysis**, Berdj Papazian; **Vienna Psychoanalytical Society**, Wolfgang Oswald; **Vilnius psychoanalytic Society**, Drasute Vaicekonyte Jonaitiene.