

Dear Colleagues and friends,

## **Greetings!**

As incoming president, I am very happy that I can start this message by saying: ***our EPA community is doing great!***

Many “*indicators*” point in that direction. Our April congress in Paris was a huge success. Not only due to the number of participants – over 4000 coming from 100 countries – but also because of the variety and quality of the topics covered, the vitality of the exchanges – formal and informal – and new initiatives generated by these exchanges. Also, our policy event – the EPA Forum- was extremely well attended and generated new possibilities for collaboration with important European stakeholder organizations. But it’s not only our congress that reflects our vitality. We see an increase in member applications, many new initiatives within the different EPA sections and, initiatives to create new scientific sections expanding the scope of our reach and interests in the field of psychiatry. Excellent examples are the creation of our Section on Public Mental Health and initiatives leading towards the creation of sections on Climate Change & MH, and Sexual orientations and gender identities. All important and timely within the modern Mental Health landscape. Finally, I am very happy to see a growing involvement of our 44 National Psychiatric member Associations (NPAs). The Council of NPAs meeting was a great success, with almost all 44 presidents attending and exchanging actively. Furthermore, a taskforce is working to translate this growing collaboration, into a new organizational structure of the EPA and the Council of NPAs, that will become active in 2025. As the largest European psychiatry umbrella association, representing more than 78.000 psychiatrist, we stand strong!

## **Thank you!**

All of this would not have happened without the leadership of our past-president, Peter Falkai, leading the EPA through difficult times these last years. But also, thanks to our excellent office and to all of you, contributing with so much energy and initiatives. And, essentially, thanks to our close collaboration with GAMIAN-Europe and EUFAMI, the patient and family associations.

## **Exciting times!**

Not only for EPA, but for the broader field of mental health these are exciting times. Mental Health stands, for good reasons, high on the agenda at national and European levels. As EPA, we will expand our efforts on the European level via our Brussels Office. Not only in collaborating with ongoing European initiatives, but also, pro-actively, together with patients and families in trying to shape these policy initiatives. One of the important steps will be to draft a manifesto defining action points in view of the European Elections.

But not only policy-wise are these exciting times. Despite the sometimes-negative press, the field of psychiatry is in full development. Knowledge into the dynamics of disorders and (positive) mental health is increasing, while at the same time acknowledging the complexity of brain and mental health. New, promising interventions such as psychedelic assisted therapy are opening-up and are being closely followed up in research, the “real” working floor, and on the level of the European Medicines Agency. Finally, and extremely important, there is growing attention towards prevention and early interventions. Public Mental Health is a promising avenue, and many European calls and projects focus on that direction. At the same time, this implies new and changing roles for psychiatrists that need to be explored and defined. Exciting and new!

## **Challenging times!**

The unfair and inhuman war in Ukraine and natural disasters such as recently in Türkiye, take a heavy toll. Horrible as they are, these challenges can make us collectively stronger. As a large European scientific association, we will continue to show our solidarity and help where we can our colleagues living these horrible situations. But many other challenges threaten the European landscape. The growing socio-economic inequalities, migration and changing political stability are among those. With respect to health care, the growing shortages in the (mental) health workforce capacity and the health of this workforce itself, are a source of great concern in many European countries. This is also true for psychiatry, where the differences between European Countries remain large, both as to the number of psychiatrists, their tasks and roles, and the training standards. European standards of care and of training are, more than ever, needed, and these needs are high on the agenda of the EPA. Our excellent educational offerings, including

our online courses, are expanding and easily available to all European psychiatrists. In addition, and in close collaboration with the Section on Psychiatry of the UEMS, we are currently working towards a European Psychiatry Curriculum (reflecting a common standard of training), with a pilot European Board exam to be organized in the spring of 2025.

### **Happy times!**

In October 2023 the EPA will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary! We will of course organize an event around this milestone and inform you in timely manner. With its 40 years, EPA is a mature, well-established organization, in its prime. I feel extremely privileged to be given the opportunity to lead the EPA for the next two years together with all of you.

I hope to meet you soon during one of our many activities and for sure no later than at our next EPA congress in Budapest in 2024.

Looking forward,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Geert Dom', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Prof. Geert Dom  
EPA President