



2019 ANNUAL REPORT



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PRESIDENT'S REMARKS



(Dr. Valbona Treska - President)

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is a pleasure for me to share with you the work, challenges, achievements, issues and obstacles encountered by the Order of Psychologists in 2019.

The Order has done significant work during the third year of our establishment, which has undoubtedly been a year of improved work standards, as well as consolidation and empowerment for every psychologist. We achieved tremendous success, such as the full membership to the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, as well as the full

membership to the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology. Moreover, the perfect and voluntary organization of psychologists across Albania enabled us to successfully provide emotional and psychological support to all the people, who were affected by the November 26th earthquake, which left thousands of people homeless and took 51 lives.

This year, we continued issuing dozens of licenses to psychologists, working with Internship Committee, the Ethics Committee and the Review Committee, as well as paving the way for the first Continuing Education activities, which have been approved by the Continuing Education Committee.

The Order has grown this year, as have its events, participation in conferences, national and international events, working groups, meetings with representatives of central and local government, and representations at the institutional level. We all grew together as we joined our forces to strengthen and enhance the role of the psychologist.

We have worked on the issues of our stakeholders and membership, provided countless services to psychologists, and collaborated to provide solution to long-time pending issues.

This year, our local coordinators did some admirable work in their respective regions, facilitated the members' work, never left their side, and were there whenever needed and showed that



immense work that can be done on a voluntary basis when people are passionate and share a common goal.

For the first time in the history of this profession in the country, we have taken confident steps towards our international relations and made our 25-year dream of being equal among equals come true. The acceptance as a Member of the European Federation of Psychologists Associations (EFPA), on 6 July 2019 in Moscow, Russia, was the most important institutional and professional achievement since the establishment of the Order.

We are the 38th member of the EFPA and now we have the desire, will, and energy to work with our colleagues across Europe as part of working groups, to share our thoughts and projects, to be involved in decision-making, and to take the psychologist profession to another level in the country.

Our full membership allows us to be best represented by professional psychologists in the relevant EFPA working groups. We are part of European level policy making for the profession, and this encourages us to enhance our professional standards.

On the occasion of our membership, in his remarks addressed to Albanian psychologists, the new EFPA President, Prof. Christoph Steinebach, among other things, stated: "We are happy to welcome you to our European professional family. There is, without a doubt, no greater achievement in a profession than joining a family of colleagues. I am delighted that we have initiated this first international journey

together. I consider this to be one of the greatest professional, but also personal challenges, and I am happy that we finalized it in the third year of the Order of Psychologists."

An equal achievement during this year was the membership to EAWOP, on 30 May 2019, in Turin, Italy, where the 19th EAWOP Congress was held and attended by thousands of participants from all over world.

Our achievements would have never been possible without the work, support and love that each and every one of you have for our profession. This year we have demonstrated that we are one of the most united communities of professionals. Rest assured that it was during this year that we showed to one another and to every Albanian that they can rely on us during natural disasters and major national crises, such as the November 26th earthquake.

Over 350 volunteer psychologists showed an extraordinary solidarity by responding to our call for help, day after day, in various areas of Albania where there were earthquake victims.

For countless days and in unending chaos, we were perfectly united, not only by assisting elderly and youth in need, but also by generating data on the situation, on the number of people who were either injured or sheltered in hotels and camps, information the number of children, elderly, and people with disabilities. During the first week, when everyone, including state authorities, municipalities, NGO representatives and civil society, engaged in organization and management activities during this



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major natural disaster, which took 51 lives, we stood on the front line, ready to assist with whatever we could.

As a result of the coordination with onsite teams, we promptly notified institutions on different families in remote areas of Albania that required blankets and food after their homes collapsed. The emergency team tirelessly worked day and night to coordinate the 350 volunteer psychologists, brought together by humanity, professionalism and willingness to help 24/7.

For purposes of coordinating work, every night upon completing field reports, we would draft daily reports, containing the data collected from 52 onsite points across Albania, and submitted them to state structures and NGOs.

Today, as I look back, I still find our flawless coordination unbelievable. Alongside our close associates, we traveled from Tirana to Durrës, Thumana, Lezha, Shëngjin, Tirana and Korça within 24 hours. We traveled from Tirana to Fier, and then to Durrës, Bubq, Thumana, Elbasan, and Shëngjin and so on.

I made constant efforts to be near every psychologist who left their homes and families to assist thousands of earthquake victims. I tried to motivate, encourage, support and say "THANK YOU" at any given moment, even though today, I am still not sure if I have said it enough, as they have shown to be EXCEPTIONAL in their work!

At the end of the year, it was impossible to present the "Psychologist of 2019" award to solely one psychologist, who had given their professional contribution to the community during the year, thus in late December, we handed it out to the 81 psychologists across Albania who provided their services in the early hours of November 26th. It was the least we could all do for them!

Dear friends and colleagues !

Significant work has been performed during this year, which you can review in this annual report, but on the first pages, I personally chose to share with you two special and memorable moments that we experienced during 2019, namely EFPA membership and the support we provided to thousands of people during the November 26th earthquake.

I firmly believe that these two extraordinary situations, one filled with by positive emotions and the other with fear, insecurity, anxiety and tension, marked psychologists' work during 2019.

In its third year, the Order of Psychologists showed that the greater the achievements and challenges, the more confident we are in the steps we take together.

Cordially,

Valbona Treska

President

**Tirana, Albania
January, 2020**



1. THE WORK OF THE INSTITUTION IN 2019

This year, all of us followed a wonderful professional path together. There have been important monthly events for the psychologists' community.

January

➤ **The work of the Order commenced this year with the expansion of the network of Local Coordinators, starting with the addition of Fier region Local Coordinator to the group of coordinators from Shkodra, Lezha and Korça regions.**



On January 29th, we welcomed Ms. Silvana Kostrica to the psychologists'

community in Fier, who, like her colleagues in other regions in the country, voluntarily took over this task.



Ms. Kostrica, a professional with many years of experience and esteemed by her colleagues, provided her assistance this year not only by being closer to the members, but also by promoting and strengthening the role of psychologists in this region. Her work and that of her colleagues in Fier has also been supportive of other colleagues, especially in the November 26th earthquake, where they joined forces to help the group of psychologists from all over Albania.



February

➤ In February, we conducted an informative training, titled: "The Role of the Psychologist, Instruments and Areas of Intervention" in a very fruitful collaboration with the well-known international company "Giunti Psychometrics".

Over the years, we have emphasized the lack of standardized tests and effective means for the psychological assessment of the individual.

On February 12th, in a hall with more than 100 participating psychologists, we introduced for the first time a series of standardized tests, which can be used mainly, but not only, by organizational psychologists.

The purpose of the training was not only to introduce this test catalog, which is filled in online and the results are generated in a few minutes by the system, but also to strengthen the role of the work and organizational psychologist in Albania. In compliance with a bilateral agreement, "Giunti Psychometrics" donated to each member of the Order of Psychologists 100 bonus credits available to download and complete at least 5 standardized tests, free of charge.

Tests, such as the Big Five Questionnaire-2 personality test, the ALQ leadership test, the TOM and WOMI motivation test, and other modern tests are already translated into Albanian for the psychologists, and will help them in

their daily work to improve professional standards.



➤ Moreover, in February 2019, we successfully finalized our cooperation with UNICEF for the publication of the first booklets on the role of the psychologist in judicial processes involving minors.





Prosecutors and judges of the civil, family and criminal chambers from all over the country, have already been provided materials, consisting of detailed information about the role and how to select psychologists for all processes in the field of justice.

The publication of these booklets follows the successful completion of the first specialized training conducted by the Order, to certify psychologists, who can be involved in all stages of judicial processes including minors.

➤ **The 3rd National Assembly of the Order of Psychologists was held on 22nd February 2019 in Korça.**



The initiative to hold an annual mobile assembly in every city brought together colleagues from all over Albania in Korça this year. This national professional event, which was broadcast on the local

media, both promotes and strengthens the role of psychologists in the city.



In addition to discussing institutional and professional issues, important decisions were made during a professional assembly.



In the most remarkable professional event of the year, psychologists from all over Albania also had the opportunity to spend time with one another, socialize and understand the work similarities and differences of various cities in the country.



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During the assembly proceedings, an annual presentation of the 2018 work of the Order and its bodies was also displayed.



March

➤ The activities of the Order carried on March 12th with a **meeting arranged in cooperation with Shkodra Office Coordinator in Kukës**. This meeting, which was attended by the representative of OP, Mr. Igli Çutra and the Coordinator of Shkodra region, Mr. Altin Nika, entailed discussions about various issues encountered by psychologists in Kukës region in their

daily work, with topics mainly focusing on school and legal psychologists.



This year, the headquarters of OP and its coordinators aimed at being as close as possible to the members, by holding frequent meetings and discussions.

➤ **The first publications of the Order of Psychologists were realized in March, namely the Code of Ethics and Regulation of Professional Disciplinary Judgment.**





The Code of Ethics, which came into force on 30 June 2017 by the First National Assembly, was published as a complete edition, to be effortlessly used by any professional psychologist.

This code is deemed to be the Bible of the profession, so the Order of Psychologists has decided to follow a new path for the institution, that of publishing manuals, protocols and guides etc., which will continue to help professionals in their respective psychology specialties towards a new direction.

April

➤ **We intensively held meetings with members in various cities of Albania. The following meeting was held on 19.04.2019 with the community of psychologists in Lushnja.**



The meeting, which was arranged in cooperation with the Coordinator of Fier region, Mrs. Silvana Duka Kostrica, focused on the problems encountered upon by psychologists in this city, licensing procedures, and delays in

conducting the first state examination, among other things.

May

➤ One of the goals of OP, since its establishment, is to strengthen the role of the psychologist, being closer to our members for any work issue they have to face every day. Following the expansion of the coordinators network in Fier, another region was added to their volunteer work. **On May 21st, we introduced Mr. Elton Kuqja as Coordinator of Durrës region.**



Mr. Kuqja shall also hold the position of coordinator in Kavaja and Rrogozhina. During his presentation, Durrës colleagues appraised Elton's will and devotion to pay his professional contribution to the city.





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After signing the contract between the Order and the local coordinator, discussions on the problems faced by psychologists in Durrës, Kavaja and Rrogozhina followed, including some alternatives to solve them.



We already have a wide range of local coordinators across Albania and the map is aimed at promptly expanding with more colleagues from other cities of the country.

➤ May was an active and successful month. During the ongoing work conducted to consolidate our international relations, since the first month of the establishment of OP, **on 31st May 2019, we successfully finalized our full membership to the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP).**



This was the first membership of the Albanian psychologists community in more than 25 years of psychology in the country, at such a European organization.



The Order of Psychologists was represented by the President, member of the National Council, Mrs. Valbona Habili, and member of the Ethics and Review Committee Mrs. Migena Buka.



During these years, both colleagues have been engaged in teaching organizational and work psychology, as



the application of this field has been difficult in Albania.



Obtaining the EAWOP membership, we are currently aiming at strengthening the role of work and organizational psychologists, since thus far, hundreds of students have been trained in this discipline, but they either work in other fields of psychology, or do other jobs, since there are few vacancies for work psychologists in the public and private sector.

June

➤ In June, we conducted several meetings with students from various universities in the country, who were about to complete their Master studies.

One of these meetings was held in the offices of the Order and it was attended by a group of Master students of psychology at "Aleksandër Moisiu" University, Durrës.

It was a great pleasure to share the work of OP, objectives, issues, as well as the

steps that each of them should take after completing their studies, until they obtain their professional license.



Furthermore, we discussed on how we could promptly solve the issues encountered by students of the psychology-sociology study program in this University, in terms of the Order membership. Students of this study program were unable to register as members of the Order for two years, as their program contained two different fields, such as psychology and sociology.



While still maintaining correspondence and owing to the will and devotion of both parties and to the decision of the Senate of "Aleksandër Moisiu" University and based on the number of



credits, in July 2019 this study program was categorized and renamed as Master's in Psychology. This has laid the foundation for membership to the Order and licensing of dozens of students, who were left pending since January 2017.

➤ **We continued holding meetings with the students, who are finishing their Master's degree and pending registration in the Order, in the European University of Tirana, the Department of Psychology.**



Considering that the Order is still a new institution, there is uncertainty regarding the registration procedures, specific legislation, required paperwork, etc.



Under such conditions, meetings, which are mostly channeled to students' QAs, help them understand the procedures that they need to follow.

➤ For a long time, psychologists from Kosovo have been trying to create their own chamber of psychologists.





For purposes of supporting and exchanging experience, a group from the Order, consisting of the President, OP team and local coordinators, namely Besmir Frroku and Elton Kuqja, traveled to Kosovo to hold a bilateral meeting.



On June 14th, a work meeting was held in Prishtina with the Deputy Minister of Social Affairs and the Deputy Minister of Health, in addition to other meetings with a few members of the body of Kosovo psychologists' community.

OPA has already accumulated an invaluable two-year experience, and upon identifying common issues with psychologists from Kosovo, we shared our experience with them, as well as the legislation and regulations of various OP committees, in order for them to make progress with the establishment of the chamber of psychologists, which will significantly strengthen the role of psychologists, as well as increase

professional exchanges between our countries.



➤ One of the main issues with the implementation of Law No. 40/2016 “On the Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania” is the failure to conduct the first state examination.



Following this report, there will be a special section for all legal procedures and meetings held during 2019 dedicated to the first state examination.



In line with such events, we held several meetings during the period May-June, including the meeting of June 18th with representatives from psychology departments in public and non-public universities, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Education.



The aim of the roundtable was addressing the draft DCM that is expected to be approved regarding the profiles of psychology for the state examination.

July

➤ EFPA Membership, 06.07.2019

A delegation of the Order of Psychologists, led by the President Ms. Valbona Treska and her team, traveled to Moscow upon the invitation to the EFPA General Assembly in July.



Our efforts started in March 2017, shortly after the establishment of OP. Correspondence with internationals, meetings and lobbying with them to be part of the EFPA, were finalized with the official application for membership in January 2018.

The Order of Psychologists of Albania, presented by its President Valbona Treska, has been accepted as new EFPA member association.



The Albanian Delegation led by Valbona Treska at the GA.

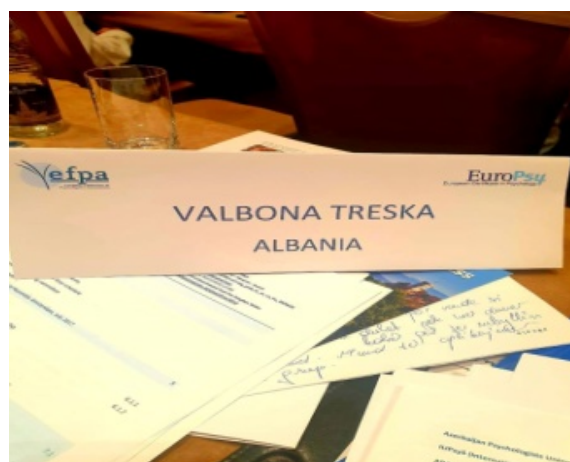


On 06.07.2019, the General Assembly of the EFPA (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations) gathered in Moscow and unanimously voted the membership of the Order of Psychologists of Albania, as the 38th full member in this organization.



It was the greatest achievement of this year, perhaps even of the many years to come.

EFPA membership was the main professional event of the Order of Psychologists. Even to this day, working on this annual report, it is unbelievable what we were able to achieve in just 2 years of work. Following the membership, the President Ms. Valbona Treska gave an open statement for all colleagues and friends of the OP. It is a very emotional statement, so we decided to share the full speech.



Public statement by the President Ms. Valbona Treska after EFPA membership:

“07.07.2019

WE DID IT”

The Order of Psychologists is part of the European Psychologists!♥♥♥

I have the great pleasure and privilege to share with you the greatest achievement of the Order of Psychologists, as well as of the entire community of psychologists in more than



20 years of psychology in Albania. On 06.07.2019, in Moscow, the General Assembly of the EFPA (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations), unanimously voted the membership of the Order of Psychologists of Albania, as a full member in this organization.



It is very difficult to find the right words to express the emotions we are feeling after this dream came true. By the end of 2016, as we prepared for the first election

and the founding assembly of the OP, we discussed about EFPA, and while visiting its website, I expressed with great pessimism: "We might become members in like 20 years!" But when things are done with a lot of passion, when you work responsibly and you have a clear vision, and you are not inhibited by anyone who gets in your way, the 20 years can be reduced to 2.

Our work that started in March 2017, shortly after the establishment of OP. The correspondence, meetings and lobbying with internationals to become part of the EFPA, were finalized with the official membership application in January 2018. Although during the meeting with President Baptista in February 2018, in Lisbon, Portugal, we were promised support, the whole membership process seemed an impossible dream.



On the morning of 18th May 2019, while on my way to the office, I read the e-mail sent by the EFPA Head Office in one breath, stating that the Executive



Committee had decided to submit our application for voting to the General Assembly to be convened in Moscow. I was looking forward to going to the office and sharing the news with the team. We had been waiting for this answer for 2 years.

We read and re-read the e-mail several times in the office, and even zoomed in the text to read it clearer and make sure we understood what we were reading. It was just unbelievable!



It takes less than a few seconds to read that email to OP, but, frankly, it took hours and months of hard work, fatigue, efforts, desire to move forward, and yet the thought to give up after realizing the narrow-mindedness, wickedness, and malevolence that some people who not like our path to success show.

But believe me when I say that it all fades away when you stand before the EFPA Assembly, with the most outstanding psychologists in Europe, to deliver the speech on the membership application. You see firsthand what it means to move forward. It is an emotion that cannot be described in words when we heard the Executive Committee say: "Albania's application was flawless!" And by the end of the voting and round of applause, it is hard to hold back emotions and tears.

This is the greatest achievement of the Albanian psychologists!!! I am proud and grateful for the work conducted by the small team of OP in the last 2 years.

I must express my gratitude to Edi, Besi, Elona, Altin, Silvana, Andi and Elton, who have always assisted in all the issues of the Order and have always provided their unconditional support. I would also like to extend my thanks to Att. Bledar Fejzo, who has been the engine and eye of the challenging OP journey. He has always been there to provide the right solutions to psychologists' best interest. I would like to thank my family, who supported me



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in every step of the way for the establishment of OP, both emotionally and financially. Dario and Thomas have dedicated so much of their time to me.



*Thank you to everyone who is always unhappy with the work of the Order!
YOU MAKE ME WORK EVEN HARDER!*

The path to EuroPsy is now open!

Best regards,

Valbona Treska

➤ **For the first time, upon order of Minister Ogerta Manastirliu on 31.07.2019, the Committee for the Evaluation of Practical Training was established, and it includes a representative of the Ministry of Health**

and Social Protection and two representatives of the Order of Psychologists.



This committee assesses the 1-year internship of Psychology graduates. Successful results in the internship examination are a legal precondition to qualify for the state examination in order to obtain the professional license.

August

➤ In August, **intensive work was carried out with the relevant ministries on psychologists' registration to the Order, as they had fulfilled legal criteria to become members, but yet to register and still worked in violation of Law No. 40/2016.**

Correspondence was particularly active with the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, because during the first



semester, a high number of psychologists, who worked in the public education system, but are not members of the Order, showed great interest.



This was a constant issue and considering the situation, the Ministry of Education took all the necessary measures to identify the psychologists who worked in violation of the legislation in force.



Moreover, with the help of a task force, the institution took several initiatives to check psychologists working in private institutions.



September

On 21 September, Albania was struck by a 5.4 magnitude (Richter scale) earthquake. This was the most severe earthquake in years and it mainly struck the regions of Tirana and Durrës, with highly unprepared communities for this situation.



In the framework of emergency and psycho-emotional support provision, the Order of Psychologist immediately mobilized to establish the volunteer psychologists' team, who would come to



the aid of public and non-public institutions in managing the situation.

On 23 September, we held a joint meeting with Tirana Municipality and Tirana Educational Directorate, and provided institutions a list of 10 volunteer psychologists, who, according to a prearranged schedule, were appointed to various schools in Tirana region, in order to provide their support to students and the academic staff.



In the mean time, the list of volunteer psychologists across Albania multiplied and region-specific databases were provided to the line ministries and local power institutions.



It was the first time that psychologists joined forces to assist in such emergency situation, and apparently, this positive

example in September transformed into a consolidated work method during the major earthquake in November.

October

➤ **On 2 October 2019, the Order of Psychologists organized a reception ceremony on the occasion of becoming a member of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA).**



This was an achievement ceremony, which brought together not only the psychologists' community, but also renowned personalities from the civil society, institutions, line ministries, and friends, who contributed to the



establishment and strengthening of this institution from the beginning.



In this great success of ours, we extended our thanks and expressed our symbolic gratitude by awarding Medals of Gratitude to four personalities of Albanian politics, who provided their extraordinary help to the Order of Psychologists over the years:



Mr. Erion Veliaj, former Minister of Social Affairs, currently mayor of Tirana, who initiated the design of law on the Order of Psychologists,



Mr. Blendi Klosi, former Minister of Social Affairs, who successfully finalized the implementation of law on the Order of Psychologists, by organizing the Founding Assembly on 28 January 2017, thus laying the groundwork for electing the steering bodies and establishing the institution. The work carried out by Mr. Klosi and his staff was extraordinary and inspiring to our good start.



Ms. Olta Xhaçka, former Minister of Social Affairs, currently Minister of Defense, who even though was the leader of the Order founding Ministry for a short period of time, signed the cooperation agreement between the two institutions for the first time, for



purposes of starting procedures to license psychologists. A historical event for the profession was the licensing of the first psychologists in September 2017, a few months after OP started operating.



Ms. Ogerta Manastirliu, Minister of Health and Social Protection (OP competent authority), who gave and still gives her extraordinary support to the strengthening and progress of our work.



Without the will and benevolence of the above-mentioned personalities, we would have never reached this stage in our work, and the reception ceremony gave the whole psychologists' community the chance to thank them.

During these two and a half years of our institution, we had countless tasks,

unimaginable success, and provided unconditional support to one another, thus we had strong reasons to celebrate together on 2 October 2019.



➤ The institution's work continued in October by **preparing internship examination questions for all psychologists, who completed the supervised 1-year internship.** Three important sets of 60 questions in total for each psychologist were published pursuant to the legislation in force, leading to the first internship examination.

➤ During this month, we carried out meetings with psychology student groups so as to provide them the necessary information on the Order of Psychologists, as well as registration



and licensing procedures. In the framework of such information provision, the Mediterranean University of Tirana hosted an open meeting with its students.



➤ Likewise, following some intensive work, this year started with the selection of Continuing Education Committee members and it continued with the completion of files with paperwork from institutions that were interested to be accredited, and **on 30 October we launched the two first institutions, which would provide accredited trainings to psychologists, upon the committee's decision.**

The establishment and operation of the continuing education system is one of those achievements that ensure psychologists' professional growth with high standards and modern knowledge.

November

➤ November was the most intensive month of the year with successful OP events, but also the massive earthquake on 26 November.

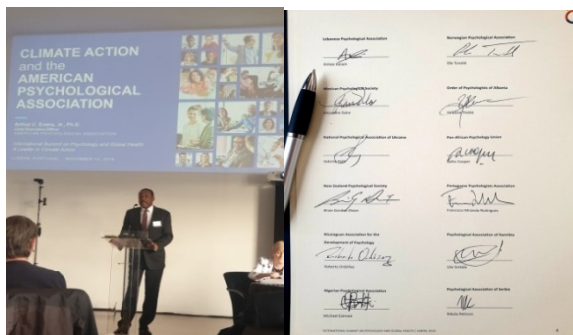
The Order of Psychologists, represented by the President Ms. Valbona Treska, partook in the International Summit on Psychology and Global Health: "A Leader in Climate Action", which was held on 14-16 November, in Lisbon, Portugal.



This Summit brought together leaders in the area of psychology from about 40 countries worldwide, in order to focus on increasing the psychology role in addressing climate change issues, specifically concentrating on SDG 13 of the United Nations Organization: "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy".



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Under the auspices of Francisco Rodrigues - President of Order of Portuguese Psychologists, and Arthur Evans - CEO of the American Psychological Association (APA), guests delivered presentations, held discussions and group work, drafted plans and presented ideas on increasing the role of organizations from each participating country on the positive impact that they may have on mitigating the negative impact of global warming, in two intensive working days.



On 15 November, we signed the "Declaration of Psychologists Activity on Global Warming", alongside 39 other countries.



As a crucial part of professional meetings from all over the world, it is now a fact that Albania was not unknown to the international arena; rather it is well-grounded in terms of global psychologists' policies.

➤ 26.11.2019 earthquake



On 26.11.2019, at 03:45 am, Albania was struck by a 6.4-magnitude earthquake, which was the most massive one in 40 years. Thousands of



buildings were damaged, and hundreds and thousands of people were either physically or psychologically harmed. 51 people lost their lives and were taken out of ruins by rescue teams, who came to our aid from several European countries.



The largest shock of the earthquake was followed by thousands of aftershocks. Dwellings and buildings, especially in Tirana, Durrës and nearby towns, were emptied for days and people had to sleep in cars. It was a disaster that Albania had never experienced before to such an extent.



On the same day, a few hours after the event, at 8 am, the President of the Order, Ms. Valbona Treska addressed to everyone, especially psychologists, with an awareness raising and solidarity message. On the early hours of the morning, psychologists across Albania were required to contact coordinators in order to provide their assistance.



On that day, Ms. Treska canceled her trip to Kiev, Ukraine, that she had to take on the early hours of November 27th, to participate on the meeting of presidents of European Orders, organized by EFPA. The trip was



planned months in advance, but she deemed it reasonable that her personal work and that of her team's was a priority, and she had to be close to everyone who was physically and emotionally harmed.



The situation was that of a war. Durrës hospitals and streets were filled with harmed people, including children. In Thumana municipality, two buildings with tens of residents inside collapsed, trapping several victims, some of whom were from the same family.



The Order of Psychologists headquarters were heavily damaged and it took weeks to restart our activities after the repair, however, that did not prevent the institution from joining efforts to help everyone.



Although we did not have previous experience in managing such situations, we promptly communicated with psychologists contact points across the country, and on the third day of the aid, 350 volunteer psychologists were gathered. The Emergency Headquarters, consisting of 15 psychologists, coordinated work in 52 various towns.

The majority of earthquake victims were initially accommodated in tents in Durrës, Thumana, Lezha, Vora, Bubq,



and other municipalities, whilst on 28 November, they were transferred to hotels, mainly in Durrës, Plazh and Shëngjin. The Order of Psychologists worked non-stop.



Our psychologists initially provided their assistance in tents, while countless aftershocks continued and the bodies were being dug out of the ruins.



“Rafaelo” Hotel in Shëngjin accommodated about 1000 people, who were assisted by psychologists in shifts, coming not only from Lezha, but also from Shkodra and surrounding areas, who would travel everyday to be beside them. Our Lezha coordinator, Mr. Besmir Frroku, coordinated onsite work.

Durrës coordinator, Mr. Elton Kuqja continuously organized thousands of victims who were accommodated in Durrës hotels, even at night. For days, our psychologists provided their uninterrupted assistance, and did not even go back to their homes.

Groups from Shkodra, under the guidance of Shkodra coordinator, Mr. Altin Nika, and groups from Kosovo,



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joined Durrës, Vora and Shëngjin colleagues, by substituting for them during long hour shifts.



From 27 November 2019 onwards, every evening we made sure that we would provide the responsible institutions real time information on the victims and their needs.



On the first two days, reports contained generic figures on the victims, where

they were accommodated and number of psychologists who were providing their assistance, to be later detailed in accurate figures on the number of children, their age, number of adults, by gender, number of persons with special needs, and number of assisting psychologists.



In this whole situation, the institution showed its maximum direct assistance to the victims, and from time to time it was present on national television in order to subside the population panic.





For days, Ms. Treska coordinated the whole psychological service at the country level, under difficult physical and infrastructural conditions, because on the first nights, she and other staff members slept and worked online in their cars, bars or areas where the victims were accommodated.



Psychologists were provided with WHO materials on psychological first aid in Albanian language, which were translated by our Kosovar colleagues and Shkodra Psychological Services Center. Likewise, each psychologist received files where they could enter accurate data on every victim they assisted.

From December 2nd, a complete coordination started among International Organizations and Non-profit Organizations in the country.



After about 2 intensive weeks of onsite work and coordination at the country level, some of the psychologists started working with international organizations and NGOs, for purposes of aiding people affected by the earthquake. In early December, we signed 5 cooperation agreements for involving the psychologists of the Order of Psychologists in these organizations' programs, by paying them for their services.

The remainder of the volunteer psychologists, who joined our call for more than two weeks, had to go back to their job positions, but they still



continued providing their volunteer assistance from time to time.

Although services started and continued for more than two weeks on a voluntary basis, national and international bodies hired about 63 full- and part-time psychologists, considering the professional work of OP.



The 26 November earthquake was turned into strength and triumph for the psychologists' community regarding the services they provided and the awareness they raised.

December

➤ On the first half of December, we continued our commitment to managing the situation caused by the earthquake. **We kept coordinating onsite teams , as well as providing information regarding the services we delivered to all institutions in the country.**

The Order of Psychologists prepared to restart working in mid-December, because the damages were numerous.



Although we had a very busy month, both physically and psychologically, as a result of the earthquake, , we continued working normally with institutional correspondences, as well as with daily issues, meetings, and preparations for the beginning of 2020 as soon as we went back to our office.

The end of year for the Order of Psychologists, was very busy due to **the closing of financial balances, preparation of the draft budget** for the following year and meetings of the National Council.

➤ In December we held a **meeting with psychology students from "Marin Barleti" University** in order to inform them on the registration and licensing procedures with the Order.





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During this meeting, a cooperation agreement was signed between the two institutions, thus increasing the number of agreements signed by the Order and various public and non-public universities in the country.



➤ Our activities were joyfully completed with a **tour of our President Ms. Treska to the areas that were affected by the November 26th earthquake**, this time not to assist the injured, but **to raise a toast for every psychologist, who joined the voluntary initiative to support the affected people**, and who for days forgot about their families, in order to provide services to thousands of people who were in an emotional shock and panic.



➤ Following the identification of professionals who left their mark on our

profession this year, we deemed that the greatest and most invaluable work was done by the large group of psychologists during the November 26th earthquake situation.



The annual "Psychologist of 2019" award could not be presented to one person only! There were a total of 81 professional psychologists, members of the OP, who left behind the trauma they experienced and volunteered during the first days onsite, from November 26th, providing their assistance to the injured.





Alongside the Emergency Headquarters, we identified each psychologist who responded to our call on the first day out of the large group of about 350 psychologists who provided assistance.



This year's "Psychologist of the Year" award was handed out to each of them, as they proved their human and professional strength in the most difficult situation our country has seen in recent decades.



2019 could not end more beautifully than that, with each psychologist who



provided their support during the emergency being on the picture.



All of the 81 psychologists, who responded to our call from the first day, were the "Psychologist of the Year"!



We have had a year full of success and challenges and we take pride not only on this group of psychologists, but on every psychologist who, although were not with us during the earthquake emergency, still work with passion and dedication every day of the year and add value to the profession.





2. BODIES OF THE ORDER OF PSYCHOLOGISTS AND THEIR FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

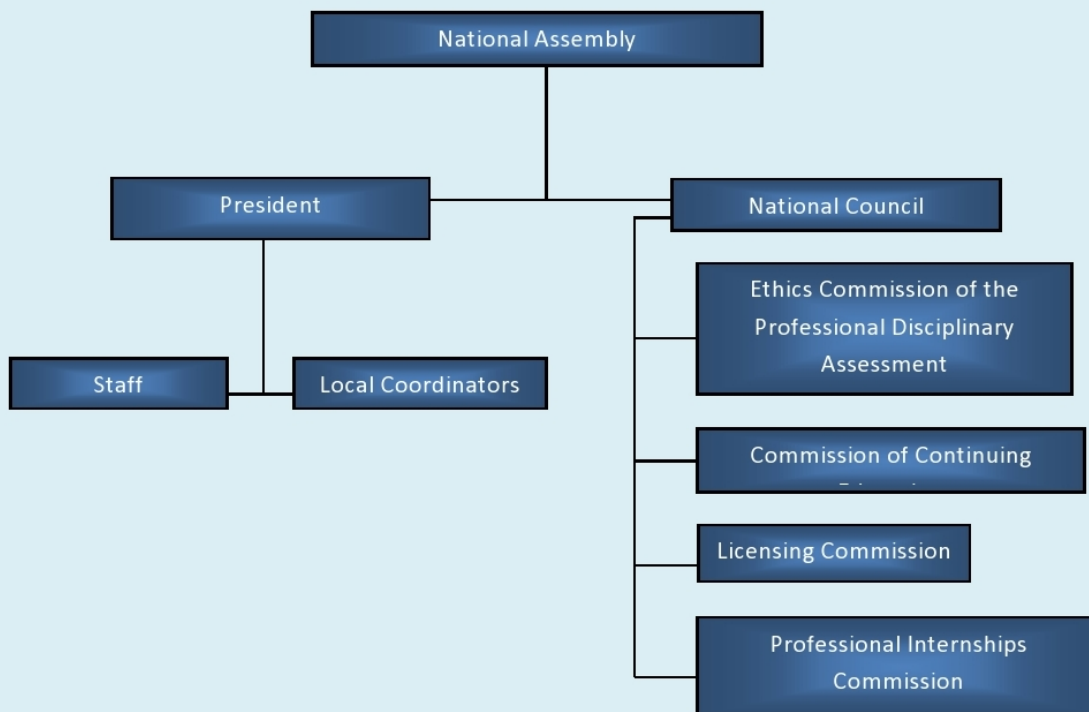
The main bodies of the Order of Psychologists are as follows:

- a) National Assembly;
- b) National Council;
- c) President of the Order;
- d) Ethical Professional Disciplinary Review Committee
- e) Continuing Education Committee
- f) Other Committees, including the Licensing Committee and the Internship Committee.

Order of Psychologists organizational chart



Organizational Chart of the Order of the Psychologists



2.1 Asambleja Kombëtare

Organi më i lartë drejtues i Urdhrit të Psikologut, bazuar në ligjin nr. 40/2016, është Asambleja Kombëtare.

Asambleja Kombëtare përbëhet nga të gjithë anëtarët e Urdhrit të Psikologut.

Asambleja Kombëtare ka këto funksione:

- zgjedh Këshillin Kombëtar dhe Presidentin e Urdhrit, me votim të fshehtë dhe me shumicë të thjeshtë të të gjithë anëtarëve të saj;
- miraton statutin e Urdhrit;

- miraton Kodin e Etikës dhe Deontologjisë;
- miraton rregulloren për gjykimin disiplinor profesional;
- miraton rregulloren për regjistrimin, anëtarësimin dhe licencimin;
- miraton rregulloren për organizimin e praktikës profesionale;
- shqyrton dhe miraton projekt-buxhetin e Urdhrit, si dhe shqyrton buxhetin faktik të tij;



- analizon veprimtarinë vjetore të organeve të Urdhrit;
- shqyrton raportin e auditit të jashtëm, në intervale tre vjeçare.



Këtë vit, **në datë 22.02.2019, në mjediset e Hotel “Koçibelli”, në Korçë, u organizua Asambleja e 3-të Kombëtare e Urdhrit të Psikologut**, në të cilën morën pjesë 78 anëtarë, me rendite si më poshtë:

- Hapja e punimeve nga Z.Igli Çutra, jurist i Urdhrit të Psikologut
- Fjalë përshëndetëse e koordinatorit lokal të qarkut të Korçës Z.Andi Petro
- Përshëndetja e Presidentes së Urdhrit të Psikologut Znj.Valbona Treska dhe analiza vjetore e punës së organeve të këtij institucioni
- Analizë e punës vjetore të Komisionit të Etikës, rastet e shqyrtuara, problematikat e hasura nga Z.Edvin Lame
- Analizë e situatës financiare të vitit 2018 dhe prezantim i projekt-buxhetit të

vitit financiar 2019 nga financieri i Urdhrit të Psikologut, Z.Lejdi Goga

- Miratimi i buxhetit faktik të vitit 2018, miratuar nga Këshilli Kombëtar i Urdhrit të Psikologut Vendimi Nr 2, datë 05.02.2019
- Miratimi i projekt-buxhetit të vitit 2019, miratuar nga Këshilli Kombëtar i Urdhrit të Psikologut Vendimi Nr 12, datë 21.12.2018
- Hapësirë e lirë për diskutime.



Asambleja u zhvillua me sukses dhe me diskutime konstruktive, duke miratuar të gjithë pikat e rendit të ditës

Asambleja e III-të Kombëtare mori vendim:

- të miratojë Buxhetin Faktik të vitit 2018, me 77 vota pro dhe 1 kundër të anëtarëve prezent në Asamble.
- të miratojë Projekt-Buxhetin e vitit 2019, me 77 vota pro dhe 1 kundër të anëtarëve prezent në Asamble.



2.2 National Assembly

The National Council is the executive body of the Order, consisting of 17 members.

The elected members of the National Council are as follows:

Dr. Blerta Bodinaku, Dr. Fleura Shkëmbi, Dr. Brunilda Laboviti, Dr. Valbona Habili, Elona Mustafaraj, Dr. Skerdi Zahaj, Rezarta Basha, Gracela Mana, Sonila Meçaj, Denada Toçe, Redina Balla

The National Council comprises 4 other members appointed by the following Ministries:

Ministry of Health and Social Protection (concurrently the Competent Authority of the Order of Psychologists by law):

Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Defense

The National Council has the following responsibilities:

- approving its own organizational structure;
- determining the membership fee and charges;
- managing movable and immovable properties of the Order at the national level;
- supervising all activities conducted by its subordinate bodies;
- drafting the status, regulations of the Order, as well as the Code of Ethics and

Deontology, and proposing them to the National Assembly for approval;

dh) maintaining and updating the Register of the Order of Psychologists;

e) setting up ad hoc working groups for carrying out checks to the psychologist profession;

ë) preparing and publishing the annual and financial report.

During this year, the National Council of the Order of Psychologists of the Republic of Albania has had a very busy schedule.



In 2019, the National Council made the following decisions:

- Decision No.1, dated 05.02.2019, "On the Approval of 2018 Annual Report"
- Decision No. 2, dated 05.02.2019, "On the Approval of 2018 Actual Budget"



- Decision No. 3, dated 26.04.2019, “On the Approval of Financial Fees for Administrative Services”
- Decision No. 4, dated 26.04.2019, “On the Establishment of an ad hoc Committee for reviewing Complaints against the Decision of Ethics Committee”
- Decision No. 5, dated 03.05.2019, “On the Approval of Psychology Profiles for the Organization of the State Examination”
- Decision No. 6, dated 03.05.2019, “On the Return of the Disciplinary Issue for Review to the Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Review Committee”
- Decision No. 7, dated 30.07.2019, “On the Establishment of the ad hoc Committee for reviewing Complaints against the Decision of Ethics Committee”
- Decision No. 8, dated 18.09.2019, “On Rejection of Decision of the Ethics Committee No. 8, dated 18.07.2019 and delivering Disciplinary Action”
- Decision No. 9, dated 18.09.2019, “On continuing the Review of the

Disciplinary Issue, calling the parties on a Hearing Session with the National Council”

- Decision No. 10, dated 18.09.2019, “On the Establishment of the ad hoc Committee for reviewing Complaints against the Decision of Ethics Committee”
- Decision No. 11, dated 18.09.2019 “On the Election of Ms. Marta Bej in the capacity of the substitute member of the Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Review Committee”
- Decision No. 12, dated 15.10.2019, “On the Amendment of Decision No. 6, dated 13.06.2019 of the Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Review Committee”
- Decision No. 13, dated 15.10.2019, “On upholding Decision No. 7, dated 18.07.2019 of the Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Review Committee”
- Decision No. 14, dated 06.11.2019, “On the Approval of the IE Examination Fee and IEC Member”.

2.3 Professional Disciplinary Review Committee

This committee was established at the Order of Psychologist in compliance with Article 19 of Law No. 40/2016 “On the Order of Psychologists”.

The Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Review Committee comprises 5 members with an over 10-year experience in this profession:

Dr. Jonida Haxhiu, Dr. Migena Buka, Dr. Stela Dhima, Dr. Lediana Xhakollari, Dr. Edvin Lame, (until 18.09.2019, when he resigned for personal reasons), currently substituted by: Dr. Marta Bej (elected through a substitute mandate, upon decision of the National Council No. 11, dated 18.09.2019).



The committee operates pursuant to the Law on the Order of Psychologists, Ethics and Deontology Committee, as well as the Regulation of the Disciplinary and Professional Review. In 2019, the Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Review Committee reviewed 10 cases, initiated by various individuals or ex officio by the President of the Order, regarding sensitive cases that attracted the public opinion.

Upon reviewing the cases, the Ethics Committee ruled the following decisions:

- In 6 cases, violations of the Ethics Code were identified and various disciplinary measures were delivered against psychologists, such as: reprimand, written remark, exclusion from OP for a period of 1-18 months.
- Upon reviewing 3 other cases, the Ethics Committee did not find any

violation of the Ethics Code, thus they rejected the complainant request.

- In 1 case an intermediate decision was ruled: Suspension of the case review until the completion of the criminal process.

During the work of the Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Review Committee in 2019, we encountered issues with the uniformity and cohesion in case review, meeting procedural deadlines, decisions reasoning, etc., which were addressed in several special meetings called by the President of the Order, as well as in special meetings of the National Council of the Order.

In some instances, decisions of this committee have been rejected and amended by the National Council, which reviews disciplinary cases as the highest review level.

The National Council decided to address these issues by making the necessary amendments to the Regulation of the Disciplinary and Professional Review Committee, by adding to the Ethics Committee a lawyer from the Order of Psychologists administration, who in the future will be responsible for the committee work in terms of procedural processes and review quality.



2.4 Continuing Psychology Education Committee

This Committee is elected by the National Council and chaired by the President of the Order.

It is composed of the following members: Prof. Dr. Theodhori Karaj, Prof. As. Dr. Zenel Orhani, Prof. As. Dr. Erika Mellonashi, and Dr. Marsela Shehu.

Upon its establishment a year ago, and the completion of all normative acts to operationalize it, this Committee continued working normally during 2019, reviewing the first applications for accreditation of the entities, which were interested in performing accredited continuing psychology education events. In 2019, the following decisions were taken by this committee:

- Decision No. 1, dated 16.09.2019
- “Accrediting the “Psychological Services Center” Institution, Shkodra as service providers in the area of psychology continuing education, with a temporary deadline of 12 months, upon determining that the submitted paperwork was complete.
- “Accrediting the “Inner Life” Institution, Tirana as service providers

in the area of psychology continuing education, with a temporary deadline of 12 months, upon determining that the submitted paperwork was complete.

- Decision No. 2, dated 29.10.2019
- Accrediting the event of “Psychological Services Center”, Shkodra, titled: “Mental Health and Psychological Well-being of Children”, at 10 credits value.
- Accrediting the event of “Psychological Services Center”, Shkodra, titled: “Positive Parenting focusing on 0-12 year old Children”, at 10 credits value.
- Accrediting the event of “Psychological Services Center”, Shkodra, titled: “Psychological Interventions in Children and Teenagers: Treating Mental Health according to the Family-centered Perspective,” at 10 credits value.
- Accrediting the event of “Inner Life” Institution, Tirana, titled: “Mindfulness Meditation in treating Stress and Anxiety”, at 12 credits value.
- Accrediting the event of “Inner Life” Institution, Tirana, Module I, titled: “Descriptive Inferential and Qualitative Analysis of Data in Scientific Research”, at 18 credits value and Module II, titled: “Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods in Social Sciences”, at 12 credits value.

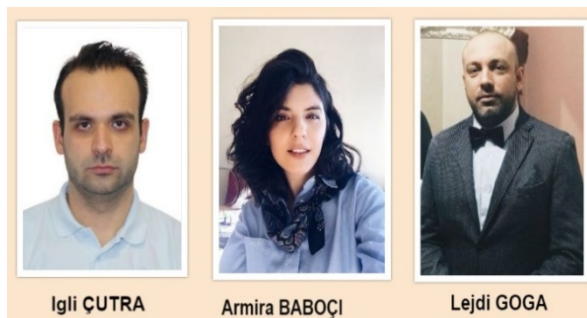
2.5 Order of Psychologists administration

The Order of Psychologists administration consists of:

Legal Office – one employee, Mr. Igli Çutra
Finance Office – one employee, Mr. Lejdi Goga



Secretariat, Protocol, Archive – one employee, Ms. Armira Baboçi



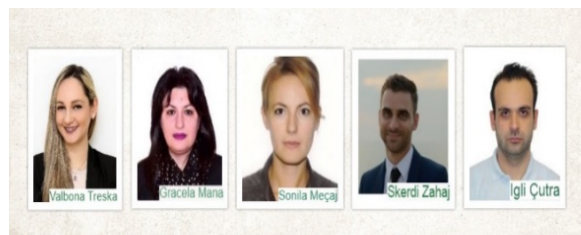
2.6 Other committees

Several other committees operate at the Order of Psychologists, as they are indispensable to its mission.

2.6.1 Licensing Committee

This Committee was established by the National Council of the Order of Psychologists and it reviews licensing requests from all psychologists, who according to law and normative acts in force, are exempt from the obligation to perform the internship and state examination.

It consists of the President Ms. Valbona Treska, lawyer Mr. Igli Çutra, and the members of the National Council: Dr. Skerdi Zahaj, Ms. Sonila Meçaj and Ms. Graciela Mana.



In 2019, this committee licensed 71 new psychologists, by the following areas:

Clinical psychologists - 32 members
School and organizational psychologists - 14 members
Counseling psychologists - 9 members
General psychologists - 6 members
School psychologists - 3 members
Institution psychologists - 3 members
Legal psychologists - 2 members
Professional orientation psychologists - 2 members
Organizational psychologists - 2 members
Psychological counseling psychologists - 2 members

2.6.2 Internship Committee

“Gjergj Fishta” Blvd., Building No. 26, Floor II, Apt. 9, Tirana, email: sekretaria@urdhriipsikologut.al, Tel.: 0035544 511 804



This committee was set up by the National Council for purposes of implementing the "Internship Regulation", approved by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in the capacity of the competent authority, which enables the legal regulation of the continuation of procedures for a significant number of newly graduated psychologists and exemption of another category from this practice.

The Internship Committee is chaired by the President of the Order and consists of members elected by the National Council, namely: Dr. Brunilda Laboviti, Mrs. Redina Balla, Mrs. Alexandra Puçi, and the lawyer of the Order of Psychologists, Mr. Igli Çutra.

This year, 123 interns with regular employment contracts in various state and private institutions registered with the Order of Psychologists.

In 2019, the Internship Committee reviewed the files of 77 psychologists and, upon reviewing them, decided:

- 18 psychologists were to be exempted from the obligation to perform the internship, based on the Memorandum of Cooperation between OP and MHSP
- 29 psychologists were to perform partial internship.
- 30 psychologists were to complete full internship

2.7 Local coordinators

This network aims at providing support and assistance, as well as protecting the interests of all members of the Order of Psychologists in their respective regions, focusing on the needs and issues that they encounter during their work.

The local coordinator's mission is as follows:

- performing services to the members of the Order, in the framework of effective dissemination of information related to the profession, collection and distribution of specific paperwork, in order to improve the quality of the psychologist profession in relevant regional institutions, and reduction of such services costs for the members of the Order in the region

- establishing and maintaining the Order's relations with local bodies and other public and private entities in the region, in order to increase the influence and factorization of the Order of Psychologists.

Some of the functions performed by Local Coordinators are as follows:

- Providing detailed information on each psychologist, who will perform the procedures of membership, licensing, internship, state examination, various trainings, etc.
- Collection of all necessary documents of the psychologists in the respective region, regarding the procedure of membership-licensing, as well as any other document related to



the Order, and their forwarding to the Order of Psychologists.

- Distribution of the individual professional permit (Professional License) for psychologists in their respective regions, or of any other document issued by the Order for the members from this region.
- Establishing and maintaining of cooperation relations with public institutions within the region, as well as with any other public or private entity that has common goals with the Order of Psychologists.
- Informing the region's psychologists about the decisions and instructions of the Order of Psychologists.
- Supporting the organization and conducting research and scientific events in the field of psychology in the region.
- Moreover, Local Coordinators take any complaints from psychologists, together with all associated paperwork and send it to the Headquarters of the Order of Psychologists, in order to initiate review procedures by the Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Review Committee.

In 2019, the Fier region coordinator and Durrës region coordinator joined the network of local coordinators of the Order of Psychologists. Currently, the distribution of the coordinator network is as follows:

Local Coordinator for Shkodra region Psychological Services and Counseling Center, with Executive Director Mr. Altin Nika
Address: Hysej Str., Dugajet e Reja, former building of "Zani i Shkodrës" school
Tel.: 0684420000

e-mail: altinnika@yahoo.com

**Local Coordinator for Lezha region:
Mr. Besmir Frroku**

Address: "Gjergj Fishta" Str., Building No. 4,
2nd floor, Lezha
Tel.: 0693930434
e-mail: besmir.frroku@hotmail.com

**Local Coordinator for Korça region:
Mr. Andi Petro**

Address: Mental Health Center, Korça
Tel.: 0695303133
e-mail: andipetro.al@gmail.com

**Local Coordinator for Fier region:
Ms. Silvana Duka**

Address: "29 Nëntori" Quarter, "Pinellopi Pirro" Str., Building: "Arditi 06" (above Ecomarket), 3rd floor, "Epoka e re" Center, Fier
Tel.: 0692436900
e-mail: silvi_kostrica@yahoo.com

**Local Coordinator for Durrës region:
Mr. Elton Kuqja**

Address: "Sefer Efendiu" Str., Building 22/11, Durrës
Tel.: 0693110878
e-mail: elton_kuqja@yahoo.it.





3. MEMBERSHIP TO THE ORDER OF PSYCHOLOGISTS

In order to become a member of the Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, psychologists must meet the following criteria:

- having a "Bachelor" and "Master of Science" or "Occupational Master's" degree in psychology or its equivalent, according to the legislation in force on higher education, issued by the higher education institution, in or outside the country, recognized by the ministry responsible for education;

- not having been convicted by a final court decision for committing a criminal

offense, related to the exercise of the profession, at the moment of applying for membership.

Membership has been on the rise during 2019, but there is still room for expansion. The Administration of the Order has continuously raised the awareness of psychologists, but also of the public and private institutions, on the need to implement the law.

In total, the Order of Psychologists has reached **914** registered members so far.

3.1 Licensed psychologists

Licensing of psychologists is regulated by the Law "On Regulated Professions in the Republic of Albania". According to this law, upon completing the Bachelor and Master studies in psychology, a one-year internship should be performed and then the state examination should be attended, as a precondition for licensing.

Exceptionally, this law stipulates that psychologists, who have performed the

profession before the entry into force of this law, are exempted from the obligation to take the state examination.

Under such conditions, pursuant to legal obligations, the Order has continued the licensing process for this category of psychologists, based on Law No. 10171, dated 22.10.2009, "On Regulated Professions in the Republic of Albania" ¹ and the



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Memorandum of Cooperation between the
former Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth
and the Order of Psychologist.

Currently, the licensing of psychologists according to the field of competence is as follows:

| Licensed psychologists by year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | Total |
|--|------|------|------|-------|
| Licensed psychologists in total | 307 | 175 | 71 | 553 |
| Clinical psychologists | 147 | 97 | 32 | 276 |
| School and organizational psychologists | 48 | 19 | 14 | 81 |
| School psychologists | 28 | 14 | 3 | 45 |
| Organizational psychologists | 8 | 13 | 2 | 23 |
| Institution psychologists | 17 | 6 | 3 | 26 |
| Professional orientation psychologists | 9 | 3 | 2 | 14 |
| Psychological counseling psychologists | 41 | 25 | 9 | 75 |
| Psychological research psychologists | 5 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| Legal psychologists | 5 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| General psychologists | 8 | 2 | 6 | 16 |
| Community psychologists | 2 | - | - | 2 |
| Psychological rehabilitation psychologists | 1 | - | - | 1 |



4.ONLINE ELECTRONIC REGISTER SET-UP

One of the legal duties of the National Council is to set up and build an online electronic register, which reflects the data available to the public on each psychologist. This process has been going on for more than a year and it is currently in its final stages of completing the data.

This register is built in the form of a platform and consists of professional identification data for each psychologist. The register is expected to work on two systems. The electronic system includes any data about member psychologists, while only the data that are necessary to the public and can be accessed by them or those concerned, are published online and are visible.

The published online register is divided into the following sections: identification number of each member,

name/surname, place of residence and contact number or an e-mail address.

Place of residence is a necessary datum in order for the parties concerned to identify the psychologists who perform the profession near their place of residence, so as to get the fastest service when they need it.

Furthermore, the newly built platform allows the digital storage of all the paperwork that has been submitted by the psychologist to the Order of Psychologists, as well as any data related to their professional life and the licensing and relicensing process. The register will also reflect the number of credits acquired by each psychologist in the framework of continuing education, and their division according to the covered field of activity.

5. THE PATH TOWARDS THE FIRST STATE EXAMINATION FOR THE PSYCHOLOGISTS PROFESSION

The order of the Psychologist, as an institution determined by law to grant the license to perform the profession of

psychologist, upon its establishment in March 2017, started an active correspondence and meetings with line



ministries and other institutions, for granting professional licenses to the category of psychologists, who were exempted from the obligation to attend the state examination and, concurrently, carried out the first state examination, which would pave the way for the licensing of graduate psychologists upon the entry into force of Law No. 40/2016 "On the Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania".

Through maximum insistence and dedication, in just a few months, the Order of Psychologists made possible the first-time distribution of Individual Permits for Performing the Profession of Psychologist (Professional Licenses) in the Republic of Albania, for the category of psychologists who had completed both study cycles before the entry into force of Law No. 40/2016, and had performed the profession of the psychologist for at least 1 year on a regular basis before the entry into force of the law.

In order to start the licensing process, a "Memorandum of Cooperation" was signed between the Order of Psychologists and the former Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, dated 19.05.2017 with Prot. No. 22, which

enabled the licensing of this category of psychologists. Thus far, 553 psychologists have been licensed under this act.

As regards psychologists, who have completed their studies after the entry into force of the law and must pass the state examination, as a final act for licensing, the institution has undertaken all the steps for this process, which in itself has been very complex.

Prior to taking the state examination, pursuant to Law No. 10171, dated 22.10.2009 "On Regulated Professions in the Republic of Albania", this category of psychologists must complete a one year internship under supervision and must take the Practical Training Evaluation examination.

The above-mentioned procedures are not autonomously performed by the Order of Psychologists, rather they must be based on bylaws issued by the competent authority (the Ministry of Health and Social Protection), the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth and the Council of Ministers.

5.1 Procedurat ligjore, konsultimet, takimet formale e informale, lobimet dhe korrespondenca institucionale shkresore dhe elektronike, me qëllim përfundimin e procesit.

Since the beginning of its work, the Order of Psychologists paid great attention to this



process and, so far, in cooperation with the competent authority, the following steps have been undertaken:

Initially, the Joint Order was signed between the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth Prot. No. 418/2, on 22.01.2018 and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection Prot. No. 574/1, dated 30.01.2018 "On the Approval of Internship Rules for the Regulated Profession of Psychologist in the Republic of Albania", which paved the way for all psychologists to perform the Psychologist Internship for the first time, in public and private institutions, as one of the preconditions of the law in order to be equipped with license. Currently, about 400 psychologists have the status of the intern.

Subsequently, the Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Order of Psychologists and the Ministry of Health, on 17.05.2018, with Article 5 sanctioning the exemption from performing the internship, in order to help the category of psychologists who have conducted the profession of psychologist for at least one year after the entry into force of the law, so that they do not carry out the internship, but only attend the state examination, in order to obtain a license. Currently, about 60 psychologists are exempted from the full internship.

Following the procedures, the Order of the Minister of Health and Social Protection was issued "On the Establishment of the Committee for the

Evaluation of Practical Training (CEPT)", No. 5880, dated 31.07.2019. Pursuant to the legislation in force, this committee was set up to evaluate the internships performed by intern psychologists, who in case of a positive evaluation, can then move on to the stage of taking the state examination, in order to be licensed. The committee was set up and the fund of questions was published under of this act. A deadline was set to 08.11.2019 for psychologists, who had completed their internship to register on the Evaluation of Practical Training. The examination date was postponed from December 2019 to January 2020, due to the November 26th earthquake.

While fulfilling such obligations, we constantly attempted and worked to approve other necessary bylaws, which would finally lay the groundwork for drafting questions from NEC (National Examination Center) and carrying out the state examination.

Under such conditions, the institution prioritized the process of forwarding information on the implementation of the first state examination from the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, which found that it was necessary to adopt a Decision of the Council of Ministers for the categorization of psychology specialties and subspecialties.

Compiling of the Draft DCM "On an Addendum to the Decision of Council of Ministers No. 649, dated 14.09.2011



"On determining the List of Specialties, Subspecialties or complementary Specialties for the Regulated Professions by the Decision of Council of Ministers No. 649, dated 14.09.2011", is a precondition for organizing the state examination.

➤ Based on Letter Prot. No. 1956 / 1, dated 15.04.2019, sent by the Ministry of Health, on performing the first state examination, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth confirmed the initiation of procedures for the approval of the relevant DCM, on the categorization of psychology specialties, which will pave the way the first state examination.

The Order of the Psychologist has been the main driving force for drafting and conducting public hearings regarding this Draft DCM. The approval of this DCM is very important for the drafting of the state examination for psychologists, for purposes of compiling the questions categorized according to the respective profiles, so its approval will pave the way for setting up the questions fund and the organization of the examination.

➤ In the framework of our activity, in order to fulfill this obligation, the Order of Psychologists itself has had a series of consultations with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health. Upon consultations and identification of more than 20 different titles of professional and Master's of Science in Psychology, conducted by psychologists

during these years in public and private universities, in consultation with the Ministry of Education, the National Council of the Order of Psychologists gathered in order to group the current masters into larger sets (specialties), based on the curriculum of each of them. Grouping them into larger specialties aimed at facilitating the state examination, since compiling a questions fund for about 20 different types of Master's courses is practically impossible!

The National Council of the Order consists of 4 representatives from the Ministries of Education, Health, Justice and Defense, as well as representatives from the academic world, including the University of Tirana.

➤ Upon determining the specialties by the National Council and in order to have an open and comprehensive process, in June 2019 we held a working meeting with stakeholders, which was attended by representatives of all public and non-public universities that have departments of psychology, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Education.



During this meeting, the agreement on the proposed subspecialties was consolidated. The relevant materials from this meeting were sent to the Ministry of Education through an official letter. It is worth noting that throughout this process, specialists of the Ministry of Education have shown their support in grouping different types of Master's in psychology into specialties, according to the respective fields of psychology.

➤ Following the consultations, another meeting was requested by the Ministry of Education, together with representatives of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tirana and the University of Durrës. The representative of the Faculty of Social Sciences, head of the psychology department, Mr. Teodhori Karaj, agreed once again with the categorization of 5 specialties in Psychology, which were proposed by the National Council of the Order of Psychologists. The specialties that were agreed upon during the meeting were officially resent from the

Order of Psychologists to the Ministry of Education in a follow-up letter.

➤ Following the procedures for the first state examination, in December 2019, the Legal Office of the Ministry of Health, upon the request for opinion by the Ministry of Education regarding these 5 proposed specialties, sent a response to the Ministry of Education specifying that such 5 specialties of psychology were deemed appropriate and it agreed on the proposed draft decision.



➤ Following this response, the Ministry of Education requested again a written opinion from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Tirana, which was represented by its employees throughout the consultation process and rejected almost all consultations and decisions as well as various proposed specialties, at the level of public and non-public institutions and universities for almost a calendar year.



From our perspective, this stance of the Faculty of Social Sciences not only was not serious and coherent, but it also resulted in an unnecessary deadlock and delay to the final design of the Draft DCM "On an Addendum to the Decision of Council of Ministers No. 649, dated 14.09.2011, "On determining the List of Specialties, Subspecialties or Additional Specialties for Regulated Professions".

➤ Based on the FSS UT letter, the Ministry of Education requested our final opinion regarding the determination of specialties. From our perspective, but also from the legal point of view, this faculty did not have to be once again part of the consultation process in January 2020, after almost a year, as this stage had passed and was creating unnecessary obstacles. Despite our opinion that all this situation created by the Ministry of Education and FSS was exaggerated, and prevented and penalized about 200 psychologists who were waiting for the state examination as soon as possible, in response to proposals made by the FSS UT, we decided to propose the following specialties so that we could continue cooperating and finalize this process, which had taken more than 2 years to implement:

1) Psychology - "Clinical Psychology and others in the area of Mental Health" Profile

2) Psychology - "School Psychology and others in the area of Education" Profile

3) Psychology - "Community Psychology and others in the Social area" Profile

4) Psychology - "Work and Organizational Psychology" Profile

5) Psychology - "Legal Psychology and others in the Legal area" Profile.

Based on these subspecialties, it was agreed to continue with the final draft DCM to be proposed to line ministers for approval.

The Order of Psychologists is now waiting for the design of the draft DCM from the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, and its proposal for approval to the Council of Ministers.

In the meantime, the Order of Psychologists prepared lecturer groups, who, based on the legislation in force, will draft questions for the proposed specialties.

6. BUDGET

6.1 INCOMES

The 2019 draft budget foresaw collecting income up to ALL 7,270,000, based on the expectation that there would be 110

new registrations, hence the collection of 850 annual membership fees. Meanwhile, the licensing of 70 new



psychologists was planned and their licensing fee would generate about ALL 1,050,000 to the budget. It results that in the 2019 fiscal year, the following approximate income was collected:

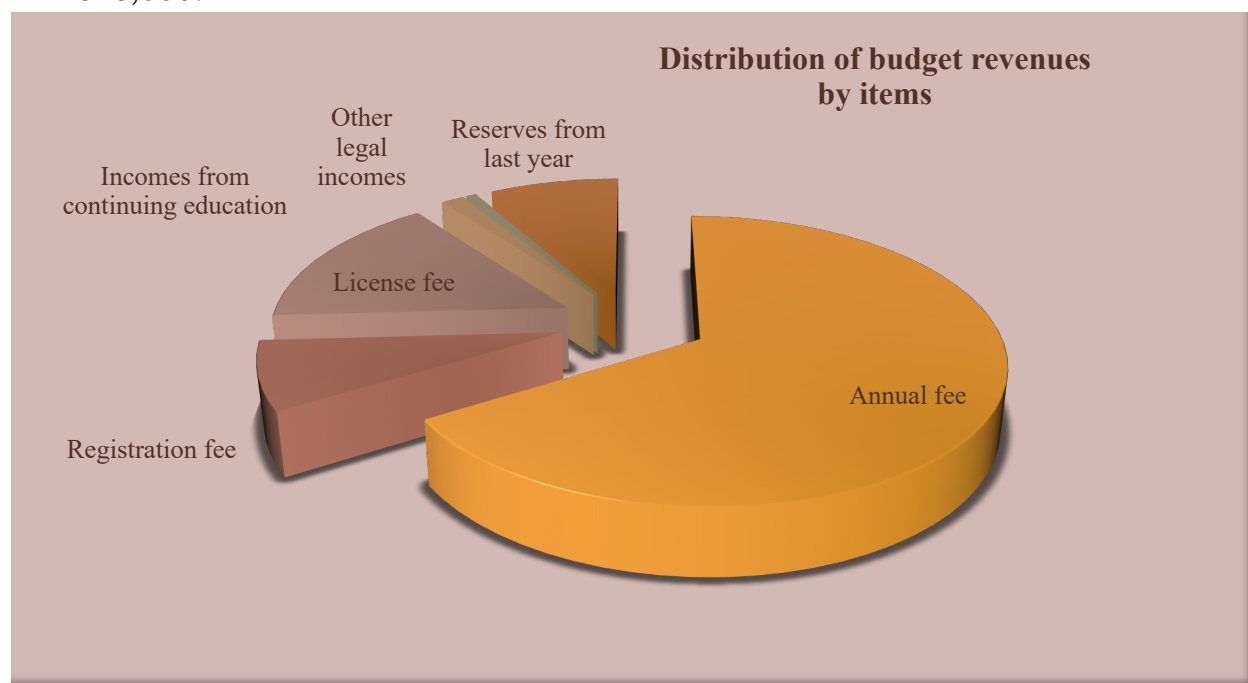
Membership fees: 914 members, a total of ALL 5,484,000.

Licensing: 86 members, a total of ALL 1,290,000.

Registration: 323 members, a total of ALL 646,000.

Moreover, for the first time ever, up to ALL 120,000 income was ensured from the continuing education process.

As per the above, a total income of ALL 8,270,000 was generated, exceeding our expectations as a result of surpassing the collection of income in the licensing item and collection of the registration fee (re-registration).



6.2 EXPENSES

Based on our three year experience, for purposes of better managing expenses and avoiding critical economic situations, we preserved a reasonable balance of mandatory expenses, which are to be completed as planned.

According to the 2019 draft budget, the following approved expenses were envisaged for the items below:

Salaries – ALL 3,308,000

Operating expenses – ALL 3,932,000

Capital expenses – ALL 30,000

It results that the salaries item has been used as envisaged and there were no changes during the year.



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As regards the operational expenses item, ALL 4,441,000 was spent, thus about ALL 500,000 more than what was provided for on the draft budget.

Firstly, this happened because the collected income exceeded the expected level, which allowed us to make unforeseen expenses, such as: software and IT expenses.

Such expenses were not planned, but turned into an emergency due to cybercrime against the official website of the Order, which obliged us to set it up once again, and take precautions for the future. Such event harmed the electronic register, which is now a protected platform.

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Budget summary table 2019

| <i>Name</i> | Amount | Currency |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | in 000/ ALL | |
| <i>Income:</i> | | |
| <i>Membership fees</i> | 5,484 | ALL |
| <i>Registration fees</i> | 646 | ALL |
| <i>Licensing fees</i> | 1,290 | ALL |
| <i>Continuing education fees</i> | 120 | ALL |
| <i>Other legal income</i> | 50 | ALL |
| <i>Last year reserves</i> | 680 | ALL |
| <i>Total</i> | 8,270 | ALL |
| | | |
| <i>Expenses:</i> | | |
| <i>Salaries</i> | 3,317 | ALL |
| <i>Operating expenses</i> | 4,441 | ALL |
| <i>Capital expenses</i> | - | ALL |
| <i>Total</i> | 7,758 | ALL |
| | | |
| <i>Next year reserves</i> | 412 | ALL |

Another expense item that was exceeded was the external experts' item, which was necessary due to various judicial

processes, initiated on the first year of the Order, as well as the need of the National Council to be assisted by



qualified experts during the design and approval of the Continuing Education Regulation.

The social activities expenses item for the members of the Order which was expected to be low, was actually tripled, due to the increase of the onsite activities number in order to directly serve our members, something which was made possible by exceeding income collection.

Moreover, there has been a slight increase in the expenses for international relations, (due to two important events, such as membership in EFPA and EAWOP), expenses for publications, etc., which shows the

expansion of operational events of the Order of Psychologists.

In 2019, despite the forecast, no capital expenses were made, in order to maintain financial stability. As can be seen, the actual 2019 budget has maintained a steady balance between income and expenses, maintaining the institution's economic stability, and reflecting the ambition to move to a new stage of the Order's functioning, so that its activity becomes as sensitive as possible to national and international policies, is as tangible as possible to the members and, above all, fulfills the legal mission for which it was established under Law No. 40/2016 on "Order of the Psychologist in Republic of Albania".

7. OBJECTIVES MET IN 2019

- Increasing the number of registered psychologists of the Order.
- Expanding the local coordinators network
- Maintaining close cooperation with the central and local power, not only in terms of empowering psychologists, but also working in joint projects at the local and national level, which has factorized the onsite work of psychologists.
- Formalizing relations with the most important NGOs in the country, aiming at increasing the employability of psychologists in various projects.
- Implementing joint projects with international institutions for the strengthening and improvement of psychologists' role both in and outside the country.
- Obtaining the full member country status to the European Association of Work and



Organizational Psychology
(EAWOP)

- Obtaining the full member country status to the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA).
- Starting the operations of the Continuing Education Committee, by fulfilling all necessary normative acts.
- Organizing the first continuing education events, thus enabling psychologists to get credits which are necessary to the relicensing process.
- Following all procedures and encouraging high state bodies to carry out the state examination.

8. OBJECTIVES FOR 2020

- Continuing the profession performance formalization process, by increasing the number of registered psychologists, who are members of the Order.
- Continuing with the Practical Training Evaluation examinations, as a precondition to attend the state examination.
- Continuing procedures for conducting the first state examination of the psychologist profession.
- Strengthening the role and status of psychologists in institutions, by approving work protocols for each area of competence.
- Continuing the expansion of the local coordinators network.
- Organizing training cycles, aiming at training specialized psychologists to intervene in civil emergency and natural disaster situations, in cooperation with national and international partners.
- Increasing cooperation with the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP), aiming at representing Albania in the standing committees and working groups of this organization.
- Improving the Continuing Education regulation, for purposes of providing quality and affordable activities to psychologists, thus making the continuing education system as functional as possible
- Restructuring the Ethical and Professional Disciplinary Review Committee in order to ensure uniformity, professionalism and efficiency in decision-making
- Raising awareness on the role of organizational psychologists and



taking initiatives for on spot application of organizational psychology in public and private institutions

- Increasing cooperation and formalizing bilateral agreements with the American Psychological Association (APA), in the framework of exchanging experience and

providing mutual assistance, in order to strengthen the psychologists' role at the national and international level.

Obtaining the full member country status to the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS), as one of the most important world organizations in the area of psychology.