

YPE H. POORTINGA
Tilburg University, Netherlands
School of Humanities

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THE ORGANIZATION OF CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This comment fully endorses the need for Continued Professional Development (CPD) expressed in the lead article. A possible discrepancy is noted with the *EuroPsy* regulations and a few questions are raised.

Keywords: assessment, Continued Professional Development (CPD), European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA), *EuroPsy*.

Until recently, a university degree at the Master's level was considered a standard of professional qualification for a psychologist's entire working life. It was up to individual psychologists whether or not they would seek further academic or professional training. This has been changing rapidly. In most countries in Europe formal requirements have been formulated or are in the process of being formulated that demand a year of working under supervision after university and thereafter CPD, especially for psychologists, who work in the area of mental health. Sometimes there are national administrative regulations, on other occasions regulations are drawn up by a national association, but it will be merely a matter of time for CPD to become a general requirement for all qualified psychologists. In the regulations concerning *EuroPsy*, the European Certificate in Psychology issued by the European Federation of Psychologists Associations (EFPA, 2013a), CPD is an explicit requirement for revalidation after each period

Corresponding address: YPE H. POORTINGA – School of Humanities, Tilburg University, Netherlands, PO box 90153, 5000 Tilburg, Holandia; e-mail: Y.H. Poortinga@uvt.nl

Ype Poortinga is currently a member of the EAC (European Awarding Committee) of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA), but this statement is a personal opinion and does not necessarily reflect the views of the EAC or EFPA.

of seven years (EFPA, 2013a; Lunt, Peiro, Poortinga, & Roe, 2014). Obviously, the lead article addresses a timely issue.

Filipia, Tarnowska, Zalewski, & Paluchowski (2015) portray assessment as a professional activity that is part of any psychological intervention and even the most central aspect of some professional fields, such as traffic or transport psychology. At present, the *EuroPsy* regulations distinguish three fields or contexts of practice: clinical/health, educational, and work & organizational, with an additional option of “*others to be specified*.” In *EuroPsy* assessment is not a field of practice but one of six basic competencies of all psychologists. As far as the need for CPD is concerned, this difference may look larger than it is. According to the *EuroPsy* regulations, psychologists are bound “to keep informed about recent professional scientific developments in psychology, including but not limited to the context of practice.” When assessment is the core professional activity, assessment-oriented development should make up most of the time spent on CPD. Moreover, the lead article suggests that CPD should extend beyond assessment as technology and include broader aspects of professional functioning. Thus, there need not be much discrepancy between the proposals by Filipiak et al. and the requirements for *EuroPsy*.

Nevertheless, there is a notable difference in as far as Filipiak et al. suggest that a continuing education “system” (emphasis added) for CPD in the area of assessment needs to be developed, while CPD requirements in the *EuroPsy* regulations (EFPA, 2013a) demand that CPD should involve a range of activities but leave the composition of a specific package largely to the individual psychologist. No numbers of hours to be spent on CPD are being mentioned by Filipiak et al., but the comprehensiveness of training proposed in the text, for example with respect to levels of assessment, suggests that the authors view CPD as more demanding than the minimum of 80 hours mentioned in the *EuroPsy* regulations.

A larger flexibility in the range of activities does not necessarily interfere with national arrangements in Poland; the *EuroPsy* regulations acknowledge local CPD requirements if such exist. However, at a time when there is a tendency towards consensus seeking on professional standards within EFPA, one may ask whether an initiative like that of Filipiak and others should be developed at a national or at an international level. In other words, should psychologists in Poland who define their professional field in terms of assessment seek regulation at the national level or at the level of Europe? A notable aspect of the target article is the objection to the present state of affairs where ministries as employers of psychologists apparently decide on professional requirements and set different standards. I wholeheartedly endorse the opinion of the authors that this is unde-

sirable; as much as possible, the profession should be in charge of setting its own regulations for professional training, including supervision and CPD. Experience has shown that national administrative agencies can be inflexible and even authoritarian, but also that they are more likely to adopt an international set of standards than one proposed only by local professionals. Perhaps this might be a reason to seek international cooperation in formulating CPD requirements.

The final issue that I would like to mention is not addressed in the lead article. A strong profession is characterized by a set of recognized methods and procedures (e.g., laid down in manuals). The area of assessment lends itself to the formulation of such standards; there is substantial agreement on the criteria for the evaluation of tests and these cover in principle all diagnostic devices (EFPA, 2013b; Evers, 2012). At the same time, psychologists tend to have much professional freedom in their choice of methods and there appear to be few attempts to regulate assessment practices. This is perhaps best reflected in the continued use of psychometrically questionable tests. The almost proverbial example is the Rorschach test that consistently has shown poor evidence of psychometric validity for over half a century, but in various countries continues to be used by numerous psychologists. Should a proposed system for CPD perhaps also seek to regulate the choice of methods and procedures with a view to enhancing the accountability of psychologists?

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