



## **Opening speech for the 4<sup>th</sup> European Congress of Psychomotricity**

**Lone Helleberg Frimodt,**

President of the European Forum of Psychomotricity (EFP)

For the 4<sup>th</sup> time a congress organised in collaboration with the European Forum of Psychomotricity is taking place.

Here you are, all of you - at this congress in Amsterdam. And this congress is in fact one of the results of the co-operation around psychomotricity that has gathered Europe since 1996 in the European Forum of Psychomotricity - and that connects you - the congress participants - and the EFP.

The Dutch organisation committee has done an enormous job in preparing this congress and I would like to thank them very much for their enthusiasm and professionalism throughout the preparation process and surely here in Amsterdam as well.

Over the next 3 days the theme of this congress: - Crossing Borders - offers you the opportunity of crossing borders between the European countries, to explore similarities and to accept the challenge of becoming acquainted with differences between the various national ideas.

We have different levels of psychomotor development, several realities in education, research and professional training - but yet a common way of approaching the human being.

This congress also allows building bridges between practitioners and researchers, and between psychomotricity and other professions.

And it offers YOU a possibility to cross your own personal borders and to open up to different ideas of psychomotricity. I am sure that this will be very rewarding and give a lot of new inspiration.

The congress offers professionals and researchers working in the field of psychomotricity the possibility to experience psychomotricity as an approach based on expert opinion and scientific evidence.

It gives an opportunity to present your own work for an international audience as well.

The congress is organised in 5 sub-themes throughout plenary conferences, short presentations and work-shops with the participation of psychomotor professionals and researchers.



The program is interesting and tempting. I am pleased to see presentations from all different corners of Europe. I am impressed once again to become aware of how wide a field psychomotricity covers – to realise once again that psychomotricity is dealing with the human being in its globality.

When you look into the program you will be inspired and the big problem will be to decide among all these interesting proposals.

Psychomotricity is a profession that develops, spreads and constantly gets an increasing reputation.

May this event lead to a positive development of the European psychomotricity .

European psychomotricity has existed since the 1930'ies. Today it is united in the organisation The European Forum of Psychomotricity (the EFP) with 15 member countries. The EFP was founded in 1996.

The General Assembly and the presidium of the EFP are working for the promotion and recognition of psychomotricity on all levels and on achieving political goals as well.

The EFP has 3 commissions working for psychomotor education, for science and research and for the profession.

They have produced valuable result such as the EFP common, minimum program of education based on European Standards - and an information brochure on psychomotricity in each of the 15 member countries. This brochure is presented for the first time here at this congress.

Psychomotricity is a recognised profession in several European countries. Our goal is to make the education and the profession recognised in every member country as soon as possible.

We want to support the national efforts in their way to recognition, with the respect of each county's distinctive character.

We want to guard the common base and the feeling of unity that we all experience in exchanging with psychomotricians from all 15 member countries.

The EFP organises different events such as Students' Academies and every 4 years a European Congress.

A congress gives the possibility of exchange, it gathers all Europe, and it gives inspiration to take back to the home-countries.



A congress is an important instrument in the process of making this platform visible– it is a political manifestation.

At the first congress in Marburg in 1996 with the theme: Psychomotor Activity and Human Development, the different European concepts had for the first time the possibility of gathering to present their respective way of seeing psychomotor work and to get a mutual inspiration.

At the second congress in Strasbourg in the year 2000 the theme was: Psychomotor Education and Therapy in a Society of Change on the Threshold of the Third Millenium. Four years of collaboration had passed and the feeling was more like presenting a unified, common profession.

At the 3rd congress: Psychomotor Identity: Similarity and Diversity, in Lisbon in 2004 we had a profession to unfold. We had a platform to present to the political Europe – a platform that gives us the possibility of establishing a recognised profession throughout Europe. Since the first congress in Marburg recognition of the profession has been achieved in various countries.

The EFP wants to play an important political role for the European Commission when it comes to all psychomotor matters such as curriculums of psychomotor education and recognition of the profession.

Since the last congress in 2004 we have achieved an important political goal:

A recognition by the European Commission in Brussels.

At the European Commission in Brussels, in Unit 4 , Internal Market, regulated professions we had a meeting with Mrs Pamela Brumter, who is head of office.

The meeting was successful and now the EFP appears on the homepage of the European Commission and is the organisation to be heard in matters of psychomotricity.

Mrs Brumter was invited to come here today but unfortunately she could not be present. Instead she has sent us a letter.

In her letter, Mrs Brumter points out a new directive from 2005 as an important step in the process of recognition of professional qualifications and of the free movement of professionals in the European Union. This is an important issue for the European Commission.



Mrs Brumter underlines the importance of co-operation between the member states to make sure that citizens can use their right of free movement but at the same time ensure that they have sufficient qualifications.

Besides the directive provides professional associations to establish common platforms.

The creation of a common platform is not yet a possibility for the EFP as it demands “at least two thirds of the Member States”.

At our meeting with Mrs Brumter in Brussels, she very much appreciated the initiative of creating bilateral charters. This means 2 national organisations signing a bilateral charter to facilitate the mobility of professionals between the two countries.

This has already been established in several cases. Mrs Brumter asked the EFP to continue in this direction. She sees it as a self-regulation system among the EFP member countries, and this regulation is exactly the purpose of the directive.

Finally, Mrs Brumter stresses the importance of collaboration and mutual responsibility between the EU Commission, the national governments and the professional organisations in the support of the free professional mobility in the European space.

Over the years since the creation of the European Forum of Psychomotricity, the educations and practices of the different countries have come closer to each other.

The mutual inspiration and knowledge of each other have opened and increased the interest of learning from each other.

The amount of scientific work and the scientific co-operation between the countries are increasing as well - to the benefit of the reputation of our profession.

Every country has something to contribute to the development of psychomotricity - and this is exactly the main goal of this congress.

In my closing remarks I would like to state that the topic of this congress – Crossing Borders – is very well chosen by the organising committee. It underlines the processes that are actually taken place in Europe.

We ARE crossing borders on several levels:



-The physical crossing borders, the inter-European mobility among students, teachers and among professionals has enormously increased.

-On a scientific, professional and political level we are crossing borders as well to explore the important question of our scientific and professional identity

-And we are crossing borders politically in our work for getting recognition of the profession.

Thanks once again to our Dutch colleagues for accepting the challenge of organising an EFP congress – and thank you to the EFP delegates for being present here in Amsterdam.

On behalf of the presidium of the EFP I'm very proud of welcoming you all by opening officially the 2008 European Congress of Psychomotricity here in Amsterdam.

Amsterdam, 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2008.