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# InterACT

Newsletter of EPA Council of National Psychiatric Associations

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## SPECIAL FILE

Initiatives and Activities of NPA Members

## I. NPAs Reports, Activities and Initiatives on COVID-19 Pandemic

### How Austria's Psychiatric Community Confronts COVID-19



While it has turned out so far that Austria has been rather lucky compared to many other countries (with up to now only 620 deaths), from the very start Austria's Psychiatric Community took immediate measures to be prepared for the worst case scenario and prevention of psychosocial damages. The following will describe some of the main initiatives and actions that were set to confront COVID-19

Austrian's psychiatric community has quickly reacted to the challenges and dangers embedded with the pandemic. It is now time

active part in international collaborations and support the Austrian psychiatric community to fulfil this goal.

[Read the full article.](#)

*Prof. Miller-Reiter Eleonore, MD, Delegate and Board member  
Austrian Society for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*

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## Mental health protection: initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina



The Global COVID-19 pandemic in Bosnia and Herzegovina resulted in numerous protective measures with influence on general health in majority of over 3 million residents.

Since first COVID-19 diagnosed case in the country (5 March 2020) until 15 May 2020 number of infected people is more than 2200 and 130 patients were deceased. Overall impression is that all measures proposed by crisis headquarters were helpful and influenced to reduce extent of epidemic but many people developed different mental health problems with specific psychopathology related to significant reduction of mobility, abrupt and sudden changes of daily activities, very limited direct contacts with other people including close family members or friends, interruption of established routines and attaining certain pleasures (...)

[Read the full article.](#)

*Prof. Izet Pajevic, President  
Prof. Mevludin Hasanovic and Dr. Goran Racetovic, Secretaries General  
Psychiatric Association of Bosnia-Herzegovina -PABH*

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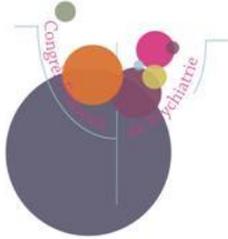
## The Croatian Psychiatric Association initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic



In the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Croatian Psychiatric Association together with other Croatian associations active in the field of mental health issued several documents, available at <http://www.psihijatrija.hr/site/?p=3835>, on different aspects of mental health care for adults, and for children and adolescents. Furthermore, as a response to the pandemic, most psychiatric facilities, public, as well as private, introduced on-line interventions, for group and individual counselling and psychotherapy and additional help lines to maintain the necessary level of mental health care.

[Read the full article.](#)

## French Psychiatry in the front line against COVID-19



Many online intervention platforms and studies have been launched in France to help the population to cope with the COVID-19 outbreak and to better know the needs of the population for fostering protective actions.

[Read the full article.](#)

*Prof. Philippe Courtet, Official Representative*

*Prof. Christophe Debien*

*Prof. Marion Leboyer*

*Prof. Luc Mallet*

*Prof. Philip Gorwood, MD, PhD, President*

*French Congress of Psychiatry*

## Hellenic Psychiatric Association's status on COVID-19 pandemic



As of 14 May 2020, 116,223 clinical samples were investigated. We had 2770 confirmed COVID-19 cases with 156 deaths. Twenty-four remain in ICU departments and 90 patients have successfully recovered after being admitted to ICU departments. Regarding the health professionals with COVID-19 there were 104 in total, with 100 more being in quarantine. There have been no COVID-19 cases among the in-patients of the mental health wards, but some cases of 15 days preventive quarantine, which are located both in psychiatric and general hospitals.

[Read the full article.](#)

*Dr. Christos Tsopelas, General Secretary of the Board*

*Prof. Dimitrios Ploumpidis, President of the Board*

*Hellenic Psychiatric Association - HPA*

## The Work of the Hungarian Psychiatric Association (HPA) during the COVID-19 pandemic



At the time of the coronavirus pandemic the first and most important task of the HPA together with the National Institute of Psychiatry and Addiction, and official consulting bodies - the Psychiatry, Psychotherapy, Addictology and Child Psychiatry Colleges of Hungary

the international and WHO recommendations.

[Read the full article.](#)

*Prof. Judit Balázs, president of HPA  
Ass. Prof. György Szekeres, president-elect of HPA  
Prof. Tamas Kurimay, Board member of HPA,  
official representative for EPA NPA  
and Board member of EPA  
Hungarian Psychiatric Association*

## The Italian Society of Psychiatry initiatives at the time of COVID-19 pandemic



The Italian Society of Psychiatry set up a series of initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely: issuing specific recommendations for Mental Health Departments; establishing a national survey in order to know how Mental Health Departments are facing the emergency; instituting a free available national phone service for supporting health operators, in collaboration with the major phone company in Italy; acquiring facial masks for Italian Mental Departments, thanks to the unrestricted support of Otsuka Pharmaceuticals. Moreover a version 2.0 of Recommendations is in preparation.

[Read the full article.](#)

*Dr. Enrico Zanaldi, MD; President  
Italian Society of Psychiatry*

## COVID-19 and mental health – The case of the Republic of Moldova



On 7 March 2020, Moldova reported its first confirmed case of COVID-19 (also known as the Novel Coronavirus) within its borders. As of 13 May, Moldova has over 5000 confirmed cases, including through person-to-person transmission. More than 1000 cases have been confirmed among the medical staff (doctors, nurses, pharmacists, auxiliary staff).

The Government of Moldova declared a 60-day State of Emergency effective 16 March 2020. At this time, all educational institutions, public venues, and open markets and malls remain closed. Face masks are mandatory in all enclosed public spaces, according to a requirement effective 7 May. Parks are open, but groups larger than three people are not permitted. Additional restrictions could be

[Read the full article.](#)

*Dr. Jana Chihai, President*

*Prof. Constanța Popa*

*Prof. Victoria Condrat*

Society of Psychiatrists, Narcologists, Psychotherapists and Clinical  
Psychologists from Republic of Moldova

## Polish Psychiatric Association's Response to Coronavirus Outbreak



As we were faced with the unprecedented Coronavirus Pandemic, members of the PTP (Polish Psychiatric Association) are working hard and uninterrupted to serve the official institutions and organisations with which they are affiliated.

Mentally ill patients with suspected coronavirus infection or comorbidities with COVID-19 are treated in specially prepared hospital wards, most often at psychiatric units.

Psychiatric hospitals are divided into non-infectious and infectious wards with separate quarantine rooms - dedicated for patients potentially exposed to infected persons and those awaiting test results. Inevitably, in the event of a serious health deterioration, psychiatric patients are to be transferred to an infectious disease hospital.

The Main Board of the PTP continues its operations in an online form.

All available PTP recommendations are published at  
<https://psychiatria.org.pl/>

The PTP hopes the COVID-19 pandemic – one of the most important crises of the 21st century – can be overcome with minimal loss for the world population and healthcare workers.

[Read the full article.](#)

*Prof. Jerzy Samochowiec, President*

*Polish Psychiatric Association*

## Management of in-patient and out-patient mental health services during COVID-19 pandemic in Slovakia



SLOVAK PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION  
SLOVENSKÁ PSYCHIATRICKÁ SPOLOČNOSŤ SLS

The COVID-19 pandemic was confirmed to have spread to Slovakia on 6 March 2020, with the first case. By 21 May 2020, 151,778 tests

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suspicious and 14 with confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis. Three patients are in intensive care units and no one is on artificial ventilation.

[Read the full article.](#)

*Dr. Lubomira Izakova, MD., PhD*

*Dr. Vanda Valkucakova, MD*

Slovak Psychiatric Association SkMA

## Mental Health Support Hotline for Healthcare Workers: Experience in Turkey



The precautions that were taken following the detection of the first coronavirus case in Turkey in only a week, which is certainly rapid, were interpreted as a foresight of a serious disease wave. In the beginning, the lack of preparedness led to distress and worry among healthcare workers which escalated concerns about the mental health consequences. Therefore, a serious 'mental health crisis' had been anticipated for healthcare professionals. Following an urgent call to its members by the Psychiatric Association of Turkey, over 200 psychiatrists got involved in a hotline project to provide crisis counselling and psychological first aid for all healthcare workers.

[Read the full article.](#)

*Dr. Necip Çapraz*

*Dr. Burcu Rağsan Erim*

Psychiatric Association of Turkey

## Initiatives, activities and documents of Psychiatric Association of Turkey during COVID-19 pandemic



The responsibilities of Associations increase enormously during extraordinary events and disasters. Some are guiding and supporting colleagues; providing true information for the public; feedback, statements and expert reports for authorities.

The Psychiatric Association of Turkey has organized expert support and productive communication with local and national authorities, a hotline for psychosocial support for healthcare workers, preventive mental health recommendations for the public are several of them. Webinars, social media, short videos and documents (total 35 in 3 languages) were main instruments.

future and indicative of the importance of infrastructure with wider, active and efficient participation.

[Read the list of documents of the Psychiatric Association of Turkey.](#)

*Prof. Ömer Böke, President  
Assoc. Prof. Koray Başar, Secretary general  
Prof. Simavi Vahip, Official Representative at EPA  
Psychiatric Association of Turkey*

## About the Recommendations of the Association of Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Narcologists of Ukraine on psychiatric care during the COVID-19 epidemic



The Association of Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Narcologists of Ukraine, on the base of recommendations of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine and the experience of the World Health Organization, the World Psychiatric Association's and the European Psychiatric Association's National Psychiatric Association Members, developed the recommendations on psychiatric care during the COVID-19 epidemic in Ukraine.

These recommendations consist of 6 sections, which describe specific tasks for psychiatric services, recommendations for consumers of psychiatric care, recommendations for mental health care professionals as well as for out-patient and in-patient services providing care under conditions of the pandemic.

[Read the full article.](#)

*Prof. Petro V. Voloshyn, MD, PhD, DMSc; President  
Prof. Nataliya O. Maruta, MD, PhD, DMSc; Vice President  
Assoc. Prof. Oleksandr Ye. Kutikov, PhD, MSc, MAT; Secretary General  
Association of Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Narcologists of Ukraine*

## RCPsych's Resources and Guidance in response to COVID-19



The Royal College of Psychiatrists is pleased to share its resources that were created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These resources aim to support the psychiatric workforce and inform the public, patients and government alike.

Our Psychiatrists' Support Service provides free, rapid, high quality peer support by telephone to psychiatrists of all grades who may be experiencing personal or work-related difficulties. This service is

[Read the full article.](#)

Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych)

## II. Young Voices of Psychiatry

### ECPs during COVID-19 pandemic – it's time for support



The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly a challenge to early career psychiatrist in Europe. Previous research has shown high rates of stress and burnout among psychiatric trainees across countries.

The current pandemic has impacted different areas of health care, and reports of suicides among health-care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic are alarming. Although we have yet to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the psychological well-being of early career psychiatrists, we want to already call for action and raise awareness in European countries to the need to support early career psychiatrists at this difficult time. As such, we will have sessions in the EPA Virtual Congress in July aiming to prepare and support early career psychiatrists in their current work.

*Ass. Prof. Egor Chumakov*

*Dr. Mariana Pinto da Costa*

The EPA Early Career Psychiatrists Committee

### What do psychiatry residents in Turkey experience during the COVID-19 outbreak?



"Pandemic". The vocabulary of our medical education is a thing that happened in the past, causing the death of many people, but is now a difficult event to live with the advanced preventive and therapeutic methods of medicine.

Whereas then suddenly in our life, here and there!

Working in a service other than our field of profession, updating general medical information and coping with the prejudices of other branches of specialities in the meantime. On the one hand, when we do a psychiatric evaluation, our concerns never end in our minds. What about the failing training?

[Read the full article.](#)

Aybeniz Civan Kahve  
On behalf of the Committee of Psychiatry Trainees,  
Psychiatric Association of Turkey

### III. EPA Webinars

#### The EPA Webinar: Ethical issues and challenges of psychiatric care during COVID-19 pandemic



The EPA's first Webinar last month, was a very successful initiative started by common concerns from the *Council of NPAs* and the *Ethics Committee* about Challenges in Psychiatric and Ethical Issues during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

During this webinar, we had the opportunity not only to identify and share best practices from our NPA partners but also to provide support to our colleagues to handle ethical issues and to better support colleagues, staff and friends.

[Read the full programme.](#)

EPA Office

#### Webinar “The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of healthcare workers”



The EPA and the European Public Service Union (EPSU) jointly organised a webinar about the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of healthcare workers. During this webinar, EPA leaders Julian Beezhold, Andrea Fiorillo and Simavi Vahip, together with the EPSU experts, shared insights on the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of healthcare workers.

[Read the full programme.](#)

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## Endorsements of NPAs

### **COVID-19 Resource Centre: Documentation for professionals and the general public**



The EPA and its partners have compiled essential and openly accessible resources for mental health professionals and the general public on a dedicated page, which will be continually updated with research, recommendations and country-specific guidelines as more information is made available.

[Visit the EPA Resource Centre.](#)

*EPA Office*

### **The EPA endorses the Italian Psychiatric Association's call for adequate mental health care during the COVID-19**



The EPA supports the Italian Psychiatric Association's ([Società Italiana di Psichiatria](#)) call addressed to the Italian National authorities regarding the provision of adequate resources to the mental health care settings during the current COVID-19 pandemic. By signing a letter of endorsement, the EPA has committed to disseminate information and raise awareness about the initiatives that the health authorities will implement to ensure the rights of people with mental health problems to get adequate access to quality care during this critical time.

[Read the full EPA letter.](#)

*EPA Office*

## Brussels Digest

### **The EU Commission launches the “COVID-19 Clinical Management Support System”**

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and healthcare professionals that are working in hospitals during this COVID-19 pandemic. This communication tool will help establish connections across countries and will ensure that knowledge and expertise are shared on a peer-to-peer basis. In this way, the “COVID-19 Clinical Management Support System” will help reduce the gaps and uncertainties related to the “unknown aspects of the virus”.

To join the “COVID-19 Clinical Management Support System” clinicians and healthcare professionals can register online [here](#).

More information on the “COVID-19 Clinical Management Support System” can be found [here](#).

*EPA Office*

## The EBRA project is launching its final call for clusters!



The EU-funded project EBRA, led by the European Brain Council, has recently opened a call for clusters to promote cooperation and exchange between brain research projects and networks. Research networks and/or projects from any brain research areas are welcomed to submit their application on the [EBRA website](#), the deadline for the submission has been extended to 1 September 2020.

The EBRA project started in 2018 and it will be running until 2021. The EPA, an active member of the EBC, is involved in this project as a third party. Find out more about the EBRA project [here](#).

*EPA Office*

## ‘Learning from the impact of COVID-19 measures: finding the balance between physical and mental health’: Meeting of the MEP Alliance for Mental Health, 15 July 2020



The [MEP Alliance for Mental Health](#), coordinated by GAMIAN-Europe, will hold its first virtual meeting, together with the EPA, on 15 July between 12:00 and 13:30 (CEST).

Although life in many countries is returning back to a certain

control it - are by no means negligible.

That is why the upcoming meeting of the MEP Alliance for Mental Health will address the mental health impact of the measures put in place for containing the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific attention will be paid to the flow and content of the information provided to the general public and the way care - as well as access to care - was organised during the crisis. The views of those affected by mental ill-health as well as those of their family carers will be the starting point for the discussion.

[Register now](#) and join us at the virtual meeting of the MEP Alliance for Mental Health!

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## Time for Action!

### Join us in July for the EPA 2020 Virtual Congress



From **4 to 7 July 2020**, join us for a **fully virtual congress** that will offer the mental health community the possibility for educational exchanges, scientific news and best practice updates! The virtual congress platform will allow you to exchange with other delegates, speakers, and industry leaders in a secure, innovative, and engaging online environment.

Registered participants will be eligible to receive the number of **CME credits** attributed to the virtual congress, and authors whose abstracts were accepted will be published in the **digital abstract book**, with e-posters available for virtual consultation.

**Sign up to receive updates on the virtual congress platform, scheduled sessions, confirmed speakers and more on the [2020 congress website](#)**

### **EPA 2021 Florence: Submit your proposal! (Deadline: 8 July 2020)**

The EPA is looking forward to reuniting leading experts,

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## 2021 in Florence, Italy.

In 2021, discussions will be guided by the congress motto "**Personalising and Integrating Mental Health Care in the Digital Era**".

Do you want to take part in the discussions and help shape a better future for psychiatry professionals and patients?

Submit your proposals for symposia, workshops, and courses to be included in the EPA 2021 scientific programme [on the congress website!](#)

The deadline for submission is 8 July 2020.

*EPA Office*

## The EPA General Assembly is going virtual too!



The EPA's Annual General Assembly will take place online on Sunday 5 July 2020.

All paid-up EPA members and NPAs are kindly invited to attend and vote. If you haven't paid up your 2020 EPA membership yet, please [visit the EPA Extranet](#) for more information.

*EPA office*

## Participate in the Collaborative Outcomes study on Health and Functioning during Infection times COH - FIT



The COH-FIT is a large international survey project supported by the EPA for the entire population of countries affected by the coronavirus pandemic COVID-19. The project involves almost 200 investigators in more than 35 countries. The aim of this survey is to help to identify the effects and factors influencing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical and mental well-being.

You are kindly asked to contribute by taking the survey [here](#)

*EPA office*

## The EPA Online Course "Introduction to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy" Enroll now!

The EPA is pleased to announce that its first acclaimed online course



### What is the course about?

[In this course](#), you will follow your teacher, Dr. Stirling Moorey, through 4 chapters of highly engaging mini-lectures, demonstrative role-plays and interviews with international experts which will help you understand the varieties of CBT, their evolution, the application of CBT to various disorders, its key clinical features and the place of this important therapy in psychiatry today.

### Who is it for?

This course is designed not only for psychiatrists and health professionals, but for all interested participant wishing to know more about CBT and mental health issues. There is no prerequisite knowledge necessary to take this course.

Watch the [teaser and enroll today!](#)

Interested in other topics? Learn about [Motivational Interviewing techniques](#).

*The course is free for the EPA paid-up members. Not a member yet? [Join us!](#)*

EPA Office

## EPA Virtual Forum 2020



The 6th EPA Forum will be held virtually on 4 July (from 9:00 to 12:30 CEST), ahead of the 28th European Congress of Psychiatry. The Forum traditionally brings together EPA members and Congress delegates with European organisations, stakeholders and policy makers, in the field of mental health, to present and discuss matters of European importance.

The 2020 edition of the EPA Forum will see the active contribution of the patient organisation GAMIAN-Europe (EPA Board member), in addition to policy makers and mental health experts from the EU and international organisations working in the field of mental health. The Forum will also see the exceptional participation of the EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides, who will provide a keynote address to open the event.

This year's Forum will focus on the consequences of the Covid-19 outbreak on mental health care, and its medium- and long-term impact on practices and collaboration between health and mental health workforces at the EU-level.

Moreover, new to 2020, the EPA Forum will be broadcasted live and offer all viewers the possibility to take an active role. Live polling will allow the audience to have its say on core issues raised during the event.

Visit the [EPA Congress webpage](#) to learn more about the EPA virtual

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## EPA Sections in the spotlight

### Medicine of subjectivity: the psychopathology of trust in the actual and future context



In the last few months we are experiencing a new type of relation with the external world. A menacing enemy which we cannot feel through our perceptive world is deeply changing our existence, destroying several of the most important foundations of humanity we have built along centuries of civilisation.

Among others trust is the building block of human relationships either at the individual level (friendship, love, partnership) or collectively (institutions, companies, countries). Without trust it is not possible for humans to live collectively and fulfil their social task for which they were programmed.

Trust has been undermined by fear, this fear of unknown and uncertainty we are living with.

The experience and the concept of trust shall be an important goal of research for psychology, sociology and other human sciences in the near future, in order to help and revert the mistrust we for sure will live in the next times.

Psychopathology as a method to the subjective world will be the basic discipline absolute necessary to support this research.

*Dr. Pedro Varandas, Secretary*  
EPA Section of Psychopathology

### Overcoming barriers for people with intellectual disabilities and mental health issues during the COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a devastating impact on most communities in Europe. People with intellectual disability and mental disorders are silent sufferers, not often talked about. Prejudice, lack of awareness and limited self-advocacy are some of the reasons for their

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Tackling injustice for this patient group is an aim of the MHID section of the EPA. Therefore, we like to draw your attention to this group of patients and hear about your experience. Please email us [here](#)

*Dr. Michael-Mark Theil*

*Dr. Bhatika Perera*

*Dr. Krzysztof Krysta*

EPA Section of Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities (MHID)

## Calendar

4 - 7 July 2020

[28th European Congress of Psychiatry](#)

(Virtual Congress)

24-26 September 2020

[18th Psychiatric Days of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

(Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina)

3-6 December 2020

[24th Annual Meeting of Psychiatric Association of Turkey & Clinical Education Symposium](#)

(Antalya, Turkey)

New dates soon

[ESSSB18, 18th European Symposium on Suicide and Suicidal Behavior](#)

(Rome, Italy)

4 - 5 March 2021

[Second International Conference of Crisis Coercion and Intensive Treatment in Psychiatry](#)

(Rotterdam, The Netherlands)

24-26 June 2021

[46th Congress of Polish Psychiatrists](#)

(Szczecin, Poland)

1 - 5 September 2021

[XII ISPS International Conference: Co-constructing healing spaces for psychoses](#)

(Perugia, Italy)

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