

March 2020

Dear Delegates

For several weeks now and in some countries even for longer, our lives have been brutally interrupted by this new, invisible and scary enemy called COVID-19. We are all facing a radical and rapid change in our way of working, living and thinking. Once again are we confronted with the power of the external reality which we have little power to control or to stop. This new situation makes us more aware of the fragility of the human condition and leaves us often disorientated. There is an overwhelming sensation of fear, easily turning into a feeling of being lost and a sense of not knowing how to go on or where to turn to.

These are times when it becomes even more important for all of us to keep in touch with one another in any way we can and to strengthen the community bonds. The EFPP is our psychoanalytic common ground, our larger professional home. The feeling of belonging to such a big community allows us to network, to share our various difficulties and our different ways of facing this new situation. We can and must think and reflect on the effects of this crisis in real time and on the possible repair we could achieve in the near future. Our capacity to keep on thinking about what is happening and our inner resources to tolerate the uncertainty are an important source of clarity and hope.

All of us can and must assume the personal responsibility by being aware, abiding by the guidelines and restrictions this situation imposes on us. It is in one sense a critical health crisis. We must address and convey this reality, speak about it, to all others we are in touch with and this includes foremost our patients to make them and ourselves safe and secure. We might be forced to make some drastic changes to the way we work and to some extent the way we live.

These are times where we might fear of being deprived of our familiar social life and our sense of belonging to a wider community. One essential factor that must inform us and can keep us together and strengthen us during this difficult time is our capacity to trust. Trust in those people who can provide us with real answers, those who can take care of us and those in the scientific community that are looking for vaccinations and medications and all those around us who we can be in solidarity with and who can make us feel safe.

We need to stay in touch with our emotional experience and to keep our eyes open and our vision focused on the community and on the future. "No one is under the illusion that nature has already been vanquished; few dare to hope she will ever be entirely subject to man. There are the elements which seem to mock the idea of human control.: the earth which quakes and is torn apart and buries human life and human achievements; water, which floods and drowns everything in its path; storms which blow everything before them; there are diseases, which we

only come to recognize recently as attacking our organisms and finally there is the painful riddle of death against which no medicine has yet been found and very unlikely ever will be. With these forces, nature rises up against us, majestic, cruel and inexorable.

She brings to our mind once again our weakness and helplessness, which we thought we could escape through the achievements of civilisation. One of the few gratifying and exalting impressions which mankind can offer, is when in the face of the elemental catastrophe, it forgets the discordance of its civilisation and all its internal difficulties and animosities and recall the great common task of persevering against the superior power of nature” (Sigmund Freud. The future of an illusion)

On behalf of the EFPP board

Cristina Călărășanu, PCFP Section Chair