



Statement of intentions as a candidate for WPA Zonal representative

Andres Lehtmets, nominated by the Estonian Psychiatric Association
for Zonal representative, WPA Zone 7

Professional background

In my professional career I was registered as specialist in psychiatry in 1992. Since then I have worked on different posts both in clinical work and administration. I am fluent in English, both written and spoken as well as Russian and Finnish.

As for WPA activities I have been the Estonian delegate to WPA General Assembly 2005, 2011 and 2017. I have participated in most WPA World Congresses since 1996 and attended several regional WPA meetings. On several occasions I have had the pleasure to take the floor as a speaker on WPA Zonal sessions. Due to long experience I have many working contacts in WPA both on the executive level as well as in the member societies.

I became a board member of Estonian Psychiatric Association in 1992 and served as a president 2004 – 2019. As a board member and later president of the national society I have initiated the applications for membership in the UEMS Section/ Board of Psychiatry (2002), the Nordic Joint Committee (2009) and EPA (2018). I was the president in of the Nordic Psychiatric Associations 2015 - 2018. I was the head of the working group that drafted the Estonian Mental Health Act in 1997 and I have been appointed the Advisor on Mental Health for the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2015. I have been the president of the Medical Association and the Chair of the Ethics Committee of the Medical Association.

As a human rights expert I have participated in the work of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) since 1998 as a member, vice president and expert. The work of the committee involves unannounced visits to places of deprivation of liberty as well as drawing up recommendations for the governments to improve the situation. This experience has been beneficial not only in developing professional competencies but also leadership and negotiation skills.

My intentions

One of the important roles of the WPA zonal representative and board member is to liaise between the Executive Committee and National Associations. For the Nordic Zone the exchange of information and meeting with the presidents of the national associations is easier, as there is a tradition to invite the zonal representative to the Nordic Psychiatric Associations meetings. The zonal representative has therefore an excellent overview of the developments in the respective zone.

WPA is the largest professional organisation of psychiatrists and therefore has an important role for the future of the profession. I would consider the first and foremost task of the WPA to promote the

ethical principles in psychiatry and to develop ethical standards in the light of the upcoming challenges in mental health. The proactive role of the national associations in this area is important and should be facilitated by the zonal representative.

The second important task is to strengthen the role of the psychiatrist in modern mental health services, improving at the same time cooperation among different specialities. In the community at large we should fight the stigma of the mental illness and that can be best done by providing user – friendly services, high ethical standards and interdisciplinary cooperation.

It is by no means of least importance to support the member associations in their ambitions in the WPA framework, be it scientific and educational activities, promoting their achievements or looking partners for future cooperation. For individual members it is important to stimulate their participation on WPA activities. Dissemination of educational and other WPA work materials is also the responsibility of the zonal representative.

A lot can be achieved in the Northern Zone through the NPA that has a well established *modus operandi* including meetings, The Nordic Psychiatrist journal, triennial Nordic Congresses and a successful scientific Nordic Psychiatric Journal. I am sure it is still possible to improve and harmonise the activities on both sides. As an example we could consider better dissemination of WPA - related information via TNP, using social media and social networks to promote WPA positions and statements, promote centres of excellence in the area and to explore avenues for joining forces with other alliances and organisations in the Nordic area.

The future of psychiatry is challenging and we should be prepared for that. The Nordic countries are notorious for their achievements in economy and technology, but also for stability, social cohesion and cultural sensitivity. Evidence-based research and high level education have made it possible to provide integrated services in mental health, to involve users and their families and strive for better functioning of persons with mental problems in the society. This experience should be shared and even used for benchmarking.

If elected the zonal representative I would do the utmost to promote WPA activities and principles and work in close cooperation with the member associations of the zone. My employer supports my activities in the WPA and I do not have conflicts with the ethical codes and purposes of WPA.