



# RUSSIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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To:

EFPA Board, Executive Council,  
Presidential Council

Moscow, 3 March, 2022

Dear colleagues!

This letter by the Russian Psychological Society (RPS) is addressed to the Board, Executive Council and members of the President's Council of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) and aims to clarify the position of RPS on the current situation.

The Russian Psychological Society has been founded and developing traditions of fundamental scientific research, psychological education and psychological practice in Russia since 1885.

In 2009 in Oslo, thanks to the support of our Norwegian and other colleagues by the decision of the General Assembly, the Russian Psychological Society became a member of EFPA.

An important tradition of the RPS has always been a high level of open scientific communication and international cooperation. When the RPS became a member of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, we supported in every possible way the development of EFPA as the organization aimed at uniting and organizing joint activities of professional psychologists in Europe. RPS became the operator of EuroPsy in Russia and for many years contributed to the creation of the most important educational, professional and ethical standards of psychological activity of EFPA in Russia and abroad, in the creation of which RPS was directly involved.

In 2014, with the active support of the RPS, the International Conference of the European Association of Psychology and Law was organized: "Actual problems of legal psychology. Victims and witnesses: from scientific research to effective practice", during which more than 400 psychologists from different countries of Europe and far abroad repeatedly emphasized the importance of close interaction in particularly difficult political and economic situations. The European Association of Psychology and Law discussed the possible risks of coming and holding Conference in Russia in 2014 and made an important decision to support the congress, including the personal participation of leading psychologists - members of the EAPL. As a result of the conference, a collective monograph was published by Taylor and Francis Group "Psychology and Law in Europe: When West Meets East".

In 2017, in order to actively promote the high professional and ethical standards of the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations a meeting of EFPA Board of Ethics and the Symposium "Professional Ethics in Psychology: European Perspective and the Role of the Ethics Committee of the European Federation" were held under the auspices of the RPS, at St. Petersburg State University, within the framework of which the reports of the Chair and members of EFPA Board of Ethics - the Chairs of the Ethics Committees of Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Norway, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Slovenia, as well as representatives of the RPS, etc. were held. The main goal of the symposium was an exchange of experience and discussion of the current situation with the solution of ethical issues arising in the practical and scientific work of psychologists and psychotherapists in different countries of Europe and Russia. As part of the Symposium, the call "Psychologists of all countries - unite" was loudly heard. The case of an appeal to EFPA by colleagues from the American Psychological Association regarding the inadmissibility of involving psychologists in work related to military operations comes as an example. The position of the EFPA EC was unanimous – the support of colleagues.

In 2019, the RPS held in Moscow the main scientific event of the EFPA - the XVI European Psychological Congress, which was attended by more than 4,000 psychologists from 94 countries. Many of you personally participated in this congress.

In 2020 RPS together with EFPA held an International Online-Conference "Role of Psychology in Fighting COVID-19 Pandemic: International Perspective" which united psychologists from all over the world in a desire to support colleagues and share successful experiences of psychological support during the pandemic.

In 2020, a special issue of the English-language journal "Psychology in Russia: State of the Art" – "Ethical issues and challenges in psychological practice and research" was published under the auspices of EFPA Board of Ethics with the financial support of the RPS, fully devoted to the ethical problems of colleagues from different European countries.

In 2021 the International Forum "Child in a Digital World", which was also supported by the EFPA, with the participation of about 10,000 specialists from more than 90 countries was held by the RPS.

We were able to establish productive cooperation in a number of EFPA structures: the Board of Ethics, the Standing Committee on Psychology in Education, the Standing Committee on Crisis, Disaster, and Trauma Psychology, the Standing Committee on Clinical Neuropsychology. We have been honored to have an RPS representative on the EFPA Executive Committee. Our representative participates in the organization of the European Journal of Psychology Open. The RPS together with EFPA have organized and conducted scientific research in various fields of psychological science and practice, as a result of which joint articles have been published, special issues of scientific journals have been prepared, and much more.

All this helped to expand the geography of interaction between Russian psychologists and European colleagues from Lisbon to Vladivostok, strengthen their scientific collaboration and develop personal friendly contacts.

At the same time the RPS strictly follows the fundamental principles and the spirit of the professional psychological corporation EFPA (Meta Code of Ethics, Accepted by General Assembly in Athens, July 1995, Revised by General Assembly in Granada, July 2005) and has in mind the basic goal - the observance of high standards of psychological activity, rendering the professional psychological support, principles of equality, respect of dignity and values of all people without any discrimination.

Due to the difficult situation, on February 24, 2022, the EFPA Executive Committee issued a statement reflecting a balanced and constructive position of the EFPA management: <https://www.efpa.eu/european-psychology-response-current-conflict>

However, as we became aware, immediately after the publication of this balanced statement by EFPA Executive Committee, an unexpected negative reaction arose from the National Psychological Association of Ukraine, which declared the necessity of the immediate exclusion of the RPS from EFPA. We feel with deep sympathy and empathy for the situation of our Ukrainian colleagues.

Experiencing unprecedented pressure, the Executive Committee of the EFPA was forced to consider the application of Ukrainian colleagues. In this regard, an extraordinary meeting of EFPA Presidents' Council is being convened on 3 March 2022 on the status of the RPS in EFPA.

These are challenging times in the world. That is why the current situation requires us to take a responsible and balanced approach in considering all issues and making any decisions. As professional psychologists, we must avoid making emotionally colored and politicized decisions, which is clearly stated in EFPA Statutes.

At the same time, we are well aware of the unprecedented informational and political pressure on the leadership of some national psychological associations, including those that initiate the question of RPS membership in EFPA, we understand the certain hopelessness of the initiatives, but we cannot agree with them and recognize them as complying with the standards of EFPA Statutes, which states the fundamental principle of depoliticization of psychological science, psychological education and psychological practice.

Death of each person is an irreparable loss for all mankind, which causes grief and suffering to relatives and friends. Now Russian psychologists carry out their professional duty and, like all their European colleagues, provide all possible comprehensive psychological aid to refugees, displaced persons and children experiencing a difficult life situation.

Please note that the Russian psychologists are free to express their civic, including political, position in various formats and have already repeatedly exercised this right under the existing legislation. One of the RPS vice-presidents is a member of the Russian Council on Civil Society and Human Rights Development.

EFPA and the RPS represent an organic integral community of top-level professionals who participate in **joint** research, implement **joint** educational programs, and **jointly** set high standards for professional psychological work and the provision of effective, professional support.

**The circumstances, to our great regret, force us to consider possibility of a difficult decision to temporary suspend the membership of the Russian Psychological Society in EFPA until all the circumstances of the current situation are clarified. At the same time, we emphasize that we do not know and no one has informed us officially or in any other way about any violations by the Russian Psychological Society of the rules of EFPA Statutes, and this is based exclusively on ethical considerations in order to prevent further escalation of tensions in EFPA.**

This tough, but balanced possible decision is aimed at preserving the ideals and values of the EFPA, at avoiding any polarization between the members of EFPA, and should contribute to the continuation of its activities.

To our great regret, although we are ready for a comprehensive dialogue, for reasons we all understand, we cannot be present at the EFPA Presidents' Council meeting on March 3, 2022.

**At the same time, the Russian Psychological Society emphasizes its steadfast adherence to the fundamental principles of EFPA Statutes, the Meta Code of Ethics and is ready to resume and continue productive cooperation.**

The Russian Psychological Society hopes that the Presidents' Council of EFPA will adopt a well-considered, balanced and forward-looking stance in its decision-making, free from momentary emotional or politically motivated steps and statements. EFPA Statutes speak to this as well.

Collaboration and interaction within the framework of a single professional field that unites psychologists from different countries is extremely important for both national professional associations and international associations as a whole. Despite the existing specifics, we share common professional values and principles. Only by combining the professional efforts of psychologists from different countries can one successfully solve professional problems and pass difficult tests. It is in difficult situations that true cooperation and friendship are tested.

We encourage all colleagues to look into the future in making decisions and to focus on our main goal: psychological care for all people.

Respectfully offer our gratitude and hope to continue cooperation,

Presidium of the Russian Psychological Society