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# **Psychology Day 2019**

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

hosted by  
MEP  
SOFIA  
RIBEIRO

**REPORT**

# **EUROPEAN PSYCHOLOGISTS**

as a resource to face european  
society major challenges



MEMBER OF EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT  
SOFIA RIBEIRO

**ORDEM  
DOS  
PSICÓLOGOS**



## Ebook "European Psychologists as a Resource to Face European Society Major Challenges"

### KeyWords

Behavioral change  
Climate Change  
Decision making  
Depression  
Economic growth  
Inclusion  
Mental Health literacy  
Mental Health management and planning  
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Mental Disorders  
Mental Health access

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjEq\\_ny-ld8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjEq_ny-ld8)

The **Portuguese Psychological Association** ("Ordem dos Psicólogos Portugueses" - OPP) is the only institution responsible for the regulation of Psychology in Portugal. It represents all the psychologists, having more than 20.000 registered professionals. Membership is mandatory. OPP is the Portuguese authority for professional recognition regarding the European professional mobility directive. OPP, as defined in Portuguese Law 57/2008 and 138/2015, aims to scrutinize the exercise and access to the profession of psychologist; to develop their technical and ethical standards, to promote the professional development of Psychologists and to exercise disciplinary power over its members, as part of an independent disciplinary system. OPP defend the general interests of its users and represents the general interests of the profession. OPP collaborates with other Public Administration bodies and participate in the creation of legislation relating to the profession. Another role is the promotion of professional accreditation processes and in the assessment of courses providing access to the profession.

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# ABREVIATIONS

AGRI - Agriculture and Rural Development

AI - Artificial Intelligence

APAV - Associação de Apoio à Vítima / Portuguese Association for Victim Support

CAP - Common Agricultural Policy

COP - Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos / Spanish Psychologists Association

COPA-COGECA - Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations-General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives

DG - Directorate-General

DG AGRI - Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development

DG CLIMA - Directorate-General for Climate Action

DG EMPL - Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion

DG HOME - Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs

EASO - European Asylum Support

EEU - Eurasian Economic Union

EFPA - European Federation of Psychologists' Association

EU - European Union

FMH - Faculdade de Motricidade Humana da Universidade de Lisboa

IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

ISAMB - Instituto de Saúde Ambiental

MFF - Multiannual Financial Framework

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

UK - United Kingdom

UN - United Nations

# INTRODUCTION

The “Psychology Day at European Institutions” promoted by Portuguese Psychologists Association with the support of Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy) and her cabinet was more than a day and more than the conference here related. It was 3 days of meetings with the President of European Parliament, Antonio Tajani, European Commissioners Carlos Moedas and Miguel Arias Cañete as well as several general-directors and other European bodies covering areas from research to fishery, agriculture, mental health, public policies design, implementation and evaluation, employment, technology or climate change. Beyond the European Institutions we have tried to demonstrate the contributions and benefits of applied psychology to citizens, their communities and organizations, indispensable for society cohesion, competitiveness, sustainability and well-being.

**Psychologists are strategic professionals to face the major challenges of our societies**, to accomplish the SDG of United Nations and to achieve the major goal of delivering the world and a future for the next generations. We believe in the most important peace project of the last 100 years – European Union.

**We are aware of its influence in each country everyday life and on a lot of other countries in Europe and around the world.** That’s why we have to proactively advocate for psychology at all political levels, as citizens, professionals and as their representatives, including at European Institutions.

## Acknowledgment

Sofia Ribeiro, European Parliament Deputy 2014-2019

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Paulo Nascimento Cabral (Sofia’s Ribeiro Cabinet in European Parliament), Telmo Mourinho Baptista (European Federation of Psychology Associations President), Vytenis Andriukaitis (European Commissionaire for Health and Food Safety), Pekka Pesonen (Secretary General of Copa-Cogeca), Mairead McGuinness (Vice-President of European Parliament & Member of AGRI Committee), Matthias Oel (DG HOME Director for Migration, Mobility and Innovation, European Comission), Bruno Brito (APAV, Portugal), Anders Wahlberg (President of Swedish Psychological Association and DG), Margarida Gaspar de Matos (FMH/ISAMB, University of Lisbon), Koen Lowet (Director for the Flemish Association for Clinical Psychologists), Damien Mattis (DG CLIMA), David Uzzell (University of Sussex), Sarb Bajwa (Chief Executive of British Psychological Society), Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic (DG EMPL Director for Social Affairs, European Comission), Angela Carter (European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology) and Oscar Cortizo (Universidad CEU-Cardenal Herrera; Vice-President of COP Valencia).



A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark blue background.

**Francisco Miranda Rodrigues**  
President of Portuguese Psychologists Association

# OPENING

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Good afternoon to everyone, I think that we should start because we have a very strict schedule for this afternoon. So saluting everyone, especially the president of the European Federation of Psychological Associations (EFPA), Telmo Mourinho Baptista, and the pre-sident of the board of the Portuguese Psychologists Association, Francisco Miranda Rodrigues, and the other members of the board of the Portuguese Psychologists Association, and of course, the members of the European Psychological Associations, and my dear speakers. Dear colleagues, advisors of the European Parliament, representatives of the various directories, general of the European Commission, including DG AGRI, which is not in the panel, but it will be among us. Dear friends, first of all, thank you very much for being here, today.

I really think that **we are making history**. For the first time, we are organizing a **working day in the European institutions that is totally dedicated to a professional area**, which I consider it is **crucial in the definition of the European policies**, which is, as we know, **Psychology**.

Policy makers often rely on numbers, statistics, economics, and financial indicators, sometimes forgetting what is most important, **people**. That is how I dealt with my term in the **Employment, Social Affairs and Agricultural and Rural Development Committees**. From an early stage, imbued with the spirit that **any proposal we make here has an impact on peoples' lives**. I tried to **transform European policies** within my possibilities, of course, making them **more social, more humanly sensitive**, and I think that we have accomplished it, at least, at certain point.

This initiative, that joins us here today, also has this **objective**: on one hand to **raise awareness for this reflection about the people**, in relation to all the things that we are doing here, but at the same time, to listen to **specialists in human behaviour** on various sectorial areas. This knowledge can allow us, as politicians, to do differently, especially in order to ensure something fundamental, the **commitment of citizens to European policies and to the European project**.



**SOFIA RIBEIRO**

European Parliament  
Deputy

To attain this goal we have a fairly complete conference. We will start with agricultural and the need to focus on the psychological well-being of our farmers, who are suffering so much in Europe, with very high suicide rates. For this debate we have a luxury panel. The role of Psychologists in the policies for refugees' integration in the well-being of Europeans, in behavioral change, in the fight against climate change are also other important themes so that we can understand the various **dimensions of Psycholo-**

-gy applied to European policies. I also want to highlight the role of Psychology in the area of employment and integration in the labor market, an area that is, of course, very dear to me and to which I am very attentive.

I will conclude with a little joke, because when we started this process, everyone congratulated me on saying: "Oh Sofia, congratulations, Psychologists are very needed in European institutions and European politics". And I surely did understand why. Thank you, and I will right now move on and give the floor to Francisco Miranda Rodrigues, you do have the floor.

**Francisco Miranda Rodrigues (President of Portuguese Psychologists Association):** Thank you. And first of all, my compliments to Sofia Ribeiro, member of the Parliament, to Telmo Mourinho Baptista, president of the European Federation of Psychologist's Associations (EFPA), and to you all, members of different institutions of the European Commission, Parliament and Psychology Associations.

Well, dear participants we are more than Portuguese, British, Swedish, Spanish, Belgium, or any other nationality citizenship, we are Europeans and citizens living on planet Earth, lucky for having a legacy called peace in our land and the responsibility to pass it to the next generations. **If we try to solve people psychological needs and major societal challenges just in our country, we cannot solve it**, not even in our country. We have to think that **we can make a huge contribution to peace in Europe**. That is why we need to share, to meet and discuss here at the European level.



**FRANCISCO MIRANDA RODRIGUES**

President of Portuguese Psychologists Association

Psychology insights can contribute to address society complex problems. Laws, procedures and politics have everything to do with human behaviour, and that is why **we need psychological science to design better public policy and to mobilize citizens** to comply and help to promote behavioural and perceptions' changes, **in order to achieve a more sustainable environment, more social cohesion and well-being in Europe and the world**.

We need Psychology to know the behavioural causes of social phenomena, and to prepare people to cope with consequences of such behaviours or some scenarios. **Psychology is a behavioural science dealing with the human being across all the life span, in every society context**, developing since the 19th century and giving birth to two Economy and one Medicine Nobel prize winners in the last 20 years. **With 300.000 professionals in Europe, and evidence based data critical to understand who we are, how we behave, how we motivate, how we make decisions, learn, think, lead or express our emotions**, we have to deliver our knowledge and skills to society and decision makers, **and these same decisions makers have to listen and to use our contributions to better building and implementing policies and to be effective on their roles** in the benefit of all of us.

It is with this major purpose and to offer our contributions that Portuguese Psychologists Association, along with other national Psychology Associations, is promoting this event, for citizens and for Europe.



Thank you all for being here, particularly to Sofia Ribeiro and Paulo Nascimento Cabral, for the contributions for this day, and **I hope that this first Psychology Day here gives the floor for Psychology in all days at European institutions.** Thank you.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Surely this is a common desire. Well, we will have a video from commissioner Andriukaitis, but I would like to highlight that the commissioner and his office have been outstanding with us, since the beginning of this project, and they have also present us the latest report of state of health in Europe, so I do thank them for this.

**Vytis Andriukaitis (European Commissionaire for Health and Food Safety):** Honorable members, ladies and gentlemen. I regret not being able to be with you in person today, but I am glad to be able to share a few words with you on the important topic you will address today.

Let me start by recalling the World Health Organization definition of health: **health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being** and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. **We cannot, therefore, underestimate the importance of Mental Health.** We have all experienced, at some point in our lives as a person, through a close friend or our family members the devastating effects of depression or other Mental Disorders, and of their consequences. Very often **discrimination adds to the suffering and disability associated with Mental Disorders.** These are terrible conditions that can impair the lives of those affected.

**Psychologists are at the heart of managing Mental Health individually and in the community.** Societies are changing around at an unprecedented pace every day: the rise of the digital war, for example, brings exciting opportunities, but also new challenges and different worries for our citizens, like cyberbullying and harassment. Depression is the fastest growing illness in people aged under 21, and 50% of Mental Health illness originate in childhood and adolescence. Moreover, **suicide and Mental Health remains an issue that we do not talk about enough,** there is still too much **stigma** attached. What this says to me is that we need to proactively tackle this issue now.



**VYTENIS ANDRIUKAITIS**

European Commissionaire  
for Health and Food  
Safety

To this end I am proud to say that Health at a Glance - Europe 2018 Report puts Mental Health at the forefront. My hope is that, now, member states will all use this tool to feed good practices in this field. This exchange of ideas will be useful as many Europeans are concerned, the report in this shows that **Mental Health is increasingly important health issue across all member states:** 84.000.000 people are affected across Europe, and in 2015 alone, **84.000 people in Europe died of Mental Health related issues,** those are 84.000 lives of people next to us that could potentially have been spared. The report also highlights that Mental Health impacts on all aspects of society, the total direct and indirect cost of **Mental Health problems amount to over 600 billion euro per year,** this cost are not only the health care systems and social security problems, but also cost incurred by lower employment and worker productivity.

Because Mental Health is not only critical for individuals' well-being, but also for social and economic participation, we need to coordinate efforts for a holistic response, integrating collaboration between various sectors and at all levels, local, national and European.

Having said all of this, I do believe that the picture is hopeful: [many European countries a reactively promoting Mental Health and improving access to treatment](#). And Mental Health has already been a major part of Public Health policies in the EU for some time. In addition, the European Framework for Action in Mental Health aims to build on these efforts and guide our activities going forward. To bring the framework to fruition, the commission's supporters encompass for action and Mental Health and well-being, collect and analyses recent activities in Mental Health from across Europe and exchanges good practices. A commendable example is Finland's implementation of a suicide prevention strategy. They have seen a fall in suicide rates of over 50% in the past 30 years. And very importantly, the commission has also set up a new group on promotion and prevention – just named Mental Health – as its focus area for 2019.

Ladies and gentlemen, with the help of my services, I am strongly determined to improve the picture of Mental Health across our union, which is why Mental Health has been put in the line lane for the coming year. But I think I am probably preaching to the choir [when I say that we need a holistic approach to this issue](#), not only when it comes to treatment, but also prevention. [Psychologists play a vital role in the non-medicinal treatment and in achieving](#), along with the actors in the sector, [healthcare improvements](#). It is our collective responsibility and requires a collaborative effort, the closer our collaboration, the more impact we will make. So, I thank you for today's event which is an important part of this joint effort. I wish the most productive discussions, thank you.

## ***Agriculture, Europe and Psychology Role Preventing Farmer's Suicidal Rate***

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** And because time is running, we will now move on to the panel on Agricultural, Europe and Psychology. Prevent farmers' suicidal rate is also a theme that is very dear to me as I am a member from Agricultural Committee, as is working on what concerns farmers farmers' needs, but also consumers' needs on the agri-food business. I will now give the floor to Pekka Pesonen.

**Pekka Pesonen (Secretary General of Copa-Cogeca):** Thank you very much; it is an honour to be here. It is not a surprise to you that the biggest single element driver for Europe in farmer community, for the moment and to affect the topic of today, is the economic development. The pressures (like in some other sectors, perhaps) are quite heavy. There is the need to actually bring in the economic stability to the farming business and the family, and also proportionally in terms of being competitive, especially when it comes to the new generations. I am very familiar to that myself; I am the 11th generation on my family farming in my native Finland. I was supposed to become a farmer myself and I have 3 kids who are part of the family estate, and I hope that some of them will eventually take over, but I would not be surprised if they not. And this is quite common in rural communities that you have different plans and you actually deviate from the agricultural profession, sometimes you comeback. And is [crucial that we would normalize the agricultural activity, in the sense that it would be a competitive sector that people, brilliant minds, young men and women would actually also come to](#). It is not only that is the duty of a family member to continue, rather than it is a progressive, lucrative opportunity for a career for anybody, any of us.

Economic factors being the big driver, but then of course as you know very well, once again from other sectors, this is usually not the only solution. The only explanation to the situation and especially when it comes to higher suicide rates that we have seen in some member states, it is about the [combination of](#)

various factors. And one true element that we have noticed all across the EU in this respect is that combination of the economic well-being of the family or the unit, the individual farmer, and how the possible family relations, let us say, sickness, health issues, hobbies, divorce, loss of close family members would have an impact, and sometimes, or even in most cases, it will access a trigger that would drive the farmer over the edge, and this is usually the pattern that we see.

Quite recent we have seen also new trends, and is no surprise to any of you, that climate change and the pressure that puts on life of farming is one of the big sources of frustration amongst farmer community, because the farmers do not see themselves as the villains of society, and some of the public comments have been quite negative about that, to put it mildly. Of course, this is a new phenomenon, and it is also linked with the climate change discussion.



**PEKKA PESONEN**

Secretary General of  
Copa-Cogeca

**How to help?** For instance, in our organization when we talk about climate change, we take a positive approach, we do not say that this dangerous. Instead we say that we are actually the contributors to the climate change mitigation, we have to adapt, but while we do that, we actually make things better, and this seems to be a very welcomed approach, at least amongst some of the communities that we deal with. More concretely, of course you know that we do not have common Psychology policy of relevance, especially on agriculture in the EU, and it is certainly not a direct element of any CAP, policy area or related policy area, but we see some opportunities to go forward with one or two initiatives from the European level. One of which it is the ongoing discussion on the future of the CAP where the so called national strategic plan could provide with some tools where the Mental Health factors of the farmer community or rural communities to that matter, could be solved or alleviated. And I would take a couple of examples, in my native Finland that was mentioned by the Commissioner. We usually talk about 100 ha loneliness, meaning that the farmers are becoming bigger and bigger and bigger, and your immediate neighbour usually is kilometres away. And that is a huge factor to many people, believe me when you go to my native farm in November when the raining has start and the snow is wet... it is not very motivating for your Mental Health. But then the communality is actually the key, and that is why, for instance, the CAP strategic national plans would provide us with some assistance in terms of sharing the burden.

To alleviate economic burden in the form of produce organization, we could promote cooperatives, farmers joining forces to do something jointly. This is also especially the case with environment policies. It is also about investment and whether the investment is reasonably in terms of the capacity of the single farmer, so that is not a burden for the coming years (keep in mind that most of the investments in agricultural are for 10, 20, 30 years length, so this is a lifetime commitment in most cases). Then finally, education is the key, like all sectors once again. In many members states we have welcomed that agricultural profession needs to be based on formal education, farmers need to be trained for the profession, and this may actually also alleviate some of the pressures.

Lastly, I would like to point out one particular item, since Commissioner pointed out the Finnish experience, where we had been able to reduce suicide rates. As far as I know, in the rural community, there is a particular program that our member organization has been working on, and that is [caring for the farmer](#). So it is like, once again, making the more communality element, you would have a contact person, individual, that would actually keep contact with you on a regular basis. That would actually make a heck of a difference to each of our lives, if there was someone who ask “Are things going in the way that you want? Can I do something? Can we improve your way of life and quality of life?”

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** And I will move on to vice-president McGuinness which has consistently been purposing this question on the suicidal rates. We can only imagine that this subject can be very dear to you because otherwise the vice president would not be here amongst us.

**Mairead McGuinness (Vice-President of European Parliament & Member of AGRI Committee):** First of all, can I just compliment Sofia, who is a friend and colleague on taking this initiative. Can I say that perhaps I knew the services of many of you in this room, because I think that the one profession which is similar to agriculture is the professional politics. And I know that in my member state in Ireland, there is an initiative just in recent months to say to politicians: “[You need to look after your Mental Health](#)”. And [I think we all do](#), and maybe it is time we are big enough to say that there is no one in this room or even outside this room that will not, at some point, have issues around how to cope with life and all the challenges it faces. Secondly to observe the good news that one of my amendments in the CAP strategic plan specifically talks about having the service to deal with Mental Health issues, so at least we would have a conversation during the common agricultural policy about this really vital issue. Because too many of our farmers suffer in silence and many die with this struggle around Mental Health and I think we owe it to them and their families to listen and to respond. Can I also say that in terms of initiatives, there is now more discussion amongst farmers in Ireland where I work, around Mental Health issues, because there are forming support groups, so they meet on each other’s farms, and normally it would be about milk yields, and money and the hardcore of farming, but actually men, and we mainly have men, are beginning to talk about how they feel, and how they will cope. It is not an easy conversation for many to have, but at least there is a space and place for this conversation to be had.

In my long experience of working in this agricultural area, I get calls from women who are concerned about their partner or their husband or their son. I had many calls during this last summer, for example, we had a wonderfully hot summer, and everyone was at the beach, but for farmers it was very traumatic, in terms of animals and animal welfare. And it was interesting that would be their partner, their woman, their wife who called to say: “Can you help?” Because the farmer had gone quiet or silent. And it is a very stressful position for me to have been in, I have to say, because there is a huge burden of responsibility, and therefore we need, as politicians a place to where we can go for help and advice, because we are not experts in this area.

Equally on a positive note, the Farmer Advisory Service in Ireland, called Teagasc, which is the Irish, I think, for knowledge, and Mental Health Ireland performed a partnership, and they have published a publication on coping with the pressures of farming. It is a very good publication and through their offices and through the farmer’s organizations, awareness is being raised about this as a tool kit for people to cope. So, a lot of good stuff is happening. Where do I see the problems here? I think there is a societal problem at the moment, and I want to name two issues which have taken up a lot of attention. One is veganism, which is a perfectly valid choice for individuals, but when you see for example, on social media, that one of the organizations has published the names of the dairy farmers in one country, and urging their members to target these farmers, then you have to ask, where do we draw a line between having a valid campaign and where it invades the well-being of the victims, as I would call them, in this case? And I think that is an issue and a concern, and we need to have a chat about that. The second issue is “climate shaming”, I mean, in the last few weeks in particular the villains of the entire climate debate appear to be



farmers, because they feed us, frankly, but because they are the ones whose livestock are engaged. And I think we need to deal with climate change in a way that makes us all partners in progress, rather than isolating those who are the baddies in the mix.



## MAIREAD MCGUINNESS

Vice-President of  
European Parliament  
& Member of AGRI  
Committee

So, I think, you know, you are the Psychologists, and I suppose you may have more answers to this, why is it that human beings are so negative about everything, rather than coming forward with proposals. I mean, I am a long time in journalism and now in this profession, at some extent we want a bad news story from the media and we want the gory details, and we want to blame someone. So I think that is a wider conversation to be had, which I think this meeting might trigger in society generally, how we actually do a greater service to our own Mental Health by constantly being negative. And I give you an example of my experience during the crash, the economic crash in Ireland, there was a very late night program on Irish television which raised up fever about everybody, politicians were to blame, the bank were awful. And in the end, I stopped watching it. **So how do we give people the tools to say “Frankly, I need not to deal with all this negativity, I need to deal with what can I do to cope with myself”?**

But I think the difficulty for farming and rural areas, I think there are more than just farmers engaged, is the isolation, is that **services are more limited in rural areas than in urban areas**, whether is transport or access to broadband or all of those issues. And also, and this is going to be very provocative, you mention you were the 11th generation of farmers and you hope somebody will take over. Frankly, I am now at an age to say the following: that the pressure that you handle over the family farm, in my view, is a problem in itself, and I think we need to address it. Because the number of farmers I have met recently, who are saying “Oh my son” – usually – “I have 3 of them, and they all want to farm, but I do not think I can handle over the farm to them. I do not think I can buy land so that they can farm”. I think we have to question whether that is a valid, if you like, vision for their own future. And I think a lot of farmers sacrifice their own happiness, because they want to hand over something, and they will not even see the results. We need to have a conversation about how we have made that almost a badge of honor.

I am from a farming family as well, and I will give you an example: my father was a small mixed farmer, and there were 8 of us, so great labor force, and very happy memories. And my brother now farms, my father starting dairy farming in 1964, my brother has a son, he is farming with him, but he did not want to be a dairy farmer, but it took my brother a long time to accept that it was ok to stop dairy farming, that they would do other things in the farm. Because of disgrace, you know family and if you like, this incredible emotional length to what my parents did and what their grandparents did. And I am now thinking that **we need to reassess what a family farm means, does the family come first or does the farm? And I fear that it is the farm.**

And I would also say that in my own country, you know the biggest wars we have are over land, usually the smallest parcels and after someone passes away, how suddenly someone who has been disengaged

with the farms, gets quite interested in having a part of that land. And all of this things I think are bad for Mental Health, because they breed, if you like, a jealousy, ill feeling, divisions in families, and I think if we were to be truthful, certainly in my experience, and because of having a journalist experience, the number of farm families I met who were divided and were not speaking, because of land, where mothers, and fathers and brothers, just very traumatic events happen. And I think that is part, perhaps of the Mental Health issues that we need to discuss.

And perhaps also being different, if you have any issues around your identity, or sexuality, I think that in a rural area that can be more difficult, so I think that is something that we also need to talk about. But the good thing is, and I will end at this point, because you have many excellent speakers here, we are talking about it, and again I am so overjoyed that you are having this meeting, and you need to spread the word that this is happening, and to allow others. And maybe we need to [plug in to the young farmers around Europe and hope that they have a better ability to speak out and be heard on this Mental Health issues](#). And also, as I said, the politicians are also prepared to say; sometimes it is hard to deal with all the negativity. [Maybe psychologists should be at the door of all parliaments, or better still, inside. Maybe you would run for politics](#). Anyway, with those remarks, thank you very much, and thank you for being with us.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Thank you Mairead for those remarkable comments and analysis. Well now I will right now give the floor to Teresa Espassandim from the board of Portuguese Psychologists Association.

**Teresa Espassandim (Board of Portuguese Psychologists Association):** Hello everyone. Just to comment on four quick topics on this matter. [More than 7% of the European Union population in 2014 reported having chronic depression](#). This is Eurostat quoting. Almost 6.000 suicides in European Union, out of 4.900.000 deaths reported in the European Union, were due to intentional self-harm. Now focusing on farmers and agricultural communities, when discussing matters and [changes in the European public policy related to the agriculture](#) and when this leads to significant changes in everyday lives of the farmers and their families in the EU, [we must prepare these changes in order to increase peoples' involvement and engagement, to enhance coping and resilient skills contributing to adjustment and continuous personal development, linked to protective factors against suicide](#). This must include budgets for Psychology support, through cost-effective psychological interventions focused on [promotion and prevention](#), as training, as enhancing health literacy and behavioral change of individuals, families and the communities on rural areas. Last topic, [psychosocial risks can be prevented and managed to promote healthy workplaces and healthy rural communities](#), as we heard, physical, mental and social health. Enhancing the farmer identity is the key. Thank you.



**TERESA ESPASSANDIM**

Board Member of  
Portuguese Psychologists  
Association

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Well, before closing this panel, I would like to pose a challenge to both the farmers and the Psychologists' representatives. And that is completely new to them,

perhaps in the very near future you could create some kind of a platform, between the farmers representatives and the Psychologists' representatives, so that we could then work together on building the European policies, of course, as lobbying, and, which is more important, addressing really individual farmer's needs. So perhaps you could create this platform in order to then move on, on this subject. Who knows? Let us dream. Well, now I will move on and pass to the panel on Refugees, Europe, and Psychology role in Inclusion. And I do have the honor to announce the DG HOME director from migration, mobility and innovation from the European Commission, Mr. Matthias Oel, please you do have the floor, is a pleasure having you here with us.

## ***Refugees, Europe and Psychology Role Inclusion***

**Matthias Oel (DG HOME Director for Migration, Mobility and Innovation, European Commission):** Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for the invitation. It is a sad fact and everyday experience that people seeking asylum and refugees experience trauma. I am saying that we are speaking of the trauma of persecution, the trauma of the journey, the trauma of violence and exploitation, including sexual violence. And there are unique genre challenges and women, girls and boys are especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Most asylum seekers have experienced mental stress or severe psychological problems that may require strong psychosocial support. The loss of relatives or friends along the way, trafficking, exposure to sexual violence, abuse, or disability related to war injuries. In having said that, we should also be aware that prolonged asylum procedures and detention can have negative impact. Refugee patients may have complex physical and Mental Health needs, and need for specialized care. Finally settling in a new country may also cause psychosocial stress. We have learnt, for example, from the German experience, that sometimes those who have to flee during the war in the former Yugoslavia developed psychological symptoms once they have found a job or an education path.



**MATTHIAS OEL**

DG HOME Director for  
Migration, Mobility and  
Innovation, European  
Commission

**What are we doing?** In the area of home affairs, we articulate the response around 3 pillars, the legal framework, the policy framework, and last but not least, funding. An EU legal framework for asylum seekers and refugees, as you know it, are already in place and it provides for identification adequate support for those in need in terms psychological support. The reception of persons with special reception needs should be a primary concern for national authorities in order to ensure that such reception facilities are specifically designed to meet their needs. Reception conditions should be provided under this direct by the member states to applicants, cover Mental Healthcare and psychological support and be adapted to the specific situation of persons with special needs including minors. Member states should ensure that the material reception conditions protect the physical and Mental Health of the asylum seekers and refugees.

The reform of the common European asylum system was also about providing those with special needs with better support, and that is why the proposal to revise this directive, which is still under negotiations, includes more detailed rules for accessing and addressing the special reception needs of applicants as soon as possible, and throughout the duration of the asylum procedure. Last but not least, to be complete, I would also like to inform that the qualifications director also includes provisions on healthcare. Well, so far, the legal provisions which are in place and partially are under negotiations.

Let me now come to the challenges. The legal provisions are written on paper and as we all know, paper is patient, **therefore the implementation of all these legal provisions is the biggest challenge we are confronted with**. There are already good practices out there, member states learn from another and from civil society organizations, and in particular the European Asylum Support which is situated in Malta, the so-called EASO has a role in this exchange, it gives, for example, guidance on reception condition and main standards to member states and monitors also where the minimum standards, I pointed out, are fulfilled.

**Another challenge is time, the earlier the better**, the earlier the special needs are identified, the earlier adequate support is provided, the easier the inclusion takes place. The more we wait, the more costly, the more complicated the healing process will be. There is also a clearly positive circle of early support, **the earlier the support, the speedier the inclusion, meaning autonomy, fast access to a path to education or to the labor market**.

**Another challenge is that the hardest cases do not always come to the available services**, it is important to reach out to them. And I would also like to stress the casual sensitive **issues of Mental Health and the social stigma around them**. Issues of honor or shame and the taboo and feelings around them are complex and require specific expertise.

Ladies and gentlemen let me now come to the **political framework**. In 2016 the Commission has adopted and launched an action plan on the integration of third country nationals, and that was in 2016, at the time when we were confronted with the high refugee influx. The action plan underlines that access to basic services, such as health services and adequate and affordable housing as well, is a basic condition for third countries nationals to start a life in society of the receiving country. This has been a priority in our work on integration, and of course remains valid. In this respect we need in particular to take the necessary measures to ensure that third country national can first access regular health services, that they are, second, able to deal with the unfamiliar healthcare systems and the third, they are – and this is very important – supported to communicate effectively with healthcare staff.

Finally, a few short remarks on **funding**. The commission finances projects supporting best practices in healthcare provision for vulnerable individuals especially refugees under the health program. The European Union Horizons 2020 Research and Innovation Program supports a number of relevant projects, such as psychological interventions with Syrian refugees. The commission also encourages member states to ensure an integrated approach, coordinating policies on housing, with the equitable access to employment, healthcare, including Mental Health or social services. And when it comes to **integration policy and intersectoral collaboration**, including communication with local, regional and national levels is, of course, of key importance and we are very active in this respect currently. And that is why we encourage the creation of competent networks of health experts, for example, on Mental Health especially post-traumatic stress of refugees. And that is also why we encourage the close collaboration among health authorities, NGO's and health professional organizations for prevention and early detection of problems and the provision of support and treatment.

Let me conclude, I hope that I have demonstrated and shown to you that **Europe has a legal and political framework in place to support refugees with psychological needs**, and that **some additional legislative**



proposals are in the pipeline. We can and are providing financial needs and I would close with the appeal that we should join forces to ensure a proper implementation of the legal provisions, the biggest challenge, as I said, and that being sure that the funding available is used the best possible way. Thank you very much.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Indeed, Director, it is a challenge for all of us to disseminate these concerns about migration and addressing migrants needs. Now it is also an honor to present Mr. Bruno Brito from the APAV, Portugal.

**Bruno Brito (APAV, Portugal):** Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues. Well, I could start my communication by presenting you the drama of refugees, I could start by calling your attention to the thousand that are fleeing from their countries and are trying to come to the desired Europe, hoping for a better life, I am sure that you are familiar with this. As you are familiar with situations like journeys through the desert, violent countries and danger trips on the sea, the loss of relatives and friends, the experience of violence, torture, forced work and the uncertainty of waiting in refugee camps once they arrived in one of the European countries. I could say something about the disappointment and frustration when not getting a job immediately as expected or the difficulties into getting into the health and social security systems. I am sure this reality is known to you. But instead I would like to call your attention to the other side of this history, namely what refugees has brought to Psychology as a science and a profession in Europe.



Psychology is in the first row assisting people in adjustment processes and it is in the treatment of Mental Health conditions. Psychology has the potential to actively contribute to alleviate suffering; therefore Psychology is in the front line of assistance to refugees. Firstly, it is known that becoming a refugee brings an impact on their Mental Health. It is considered a common practice to look for signs and syndromes of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder in this population – these are the most prevalent Mental Health problems within refugees; further research also says that being a refugee is a known risk factor for the deterioration of physical health.

However, crisis is also an opportunity, like an individual may grow in adversity, Psychology as a science is growing as well. For most Psychologists working with refugees it is an opportunity to know how Mental Healthcare is provided in other countries outside of Europe, how to better understand how human can cope with highly traumatic events, to improve assessment tools of personality, symptoms and behaviors. It is also an opportunity to understand how humans are able to tackle adversity and trauma, seeking meaning and support, sometimes even psychological well-being and community habits, culture and religion. It is amazing to see that there are psychological patterns of response to trauma that can be assumed as common to all humans, but also other different Mental Health strategies for adaptation that help this population to carry on.

The question is how to work with this reality? Is our Psychologists' bag of tools enough? Is it adapted to help these people? Individual interventions are needed, and Psychotherapy is a fundamental tool, that is for sure. Nevertheless, it is impossible to address Mental Health needs of refugees just with Psychotherapy. An intervention that aims to be successful has to address also the social integration within the new communities, the access to education and health and the possibility for refugees to continue to practice their culture and religion. It is fundamental that peoples' identity is respected. Psychology plays an important role to help the society to understand that integration is a process that can take many years, and it is not just a matter of learning a new language and getting a new job. The family ties are important, and the reunification of families should be a priority in the welcome countries, but also the contact with relatives and friends on the home countries is necessary. Providing care in the mother tongue of refugees' population is essential. The training of non-healthcare professionals, like translators, to work in Psychology settings, is an important task for us, we have to realize that most of these translators were or are also refugees, besides most of them are not professional translators. In our experience it is possible to train them to be sensitive to confidentiality, not to add or take any information during translation, to be accurate and to separate their own stories from the ones they are translating. The separation of stories is crucial, if we do not want to re-traumatize the translators by exposing them to highly traumatic and even some crazy similar experiences.

I think I can say that never in the past, as now, were Psychologists forced to have new ways of working, adapting their knowledge, not to a new reality, but a much more broad and complex reality. The refugee population in Europe is no longer a small population that can be addressed with a few specialists, how to work with trauma in a multicultural and a multireligion sensitive approach has become to European Psychologists a must in their daily practice. To understand different ways of thinking and behaving, to understand different reactions to normal situations, to understand in what and why people are different is a pillar for acceptance and integration. Without acceptance and integration, it is very difficult to have peace. Hate speeches are usually based on ignorance. Also Psychology plays a very important role on this effort in interpreting behaviors and educating society about this difference. Communities informed about different realities, cultures, religions, habits and life experiences, which sometimes can be very traumatic, will be more open and integrative in their nature.

In today's society we have a phenomenon of terrorism that is more and more a complex social problem. Integration of individuals at the margin of society and the promotion of antiradicalization narratives are essential to prevent extreme and violent behaviors. We need to understand how these behaviors can develop and grow within refugee communities. However, refugees can also be victims, like in the example of becoming a target for far-right extremists. Refugees are a vulnerable population in our society; they are at risk to become victims, not only from hate crimes, but all sort of crimes, financial scams, crimes against patrimony, human trafficking or other crimes against human rights.

It is not granted that communities, politicians, decisions makers and influencers understand the vulnerabilities of refugees, as Psychologists see them. We, as Mental Health professionals have the responsibility to communicate to society, to point out gains better than vulnerabilities, speak about health and coping better than illness and madness, or to highlight the beauty of diversity and the curiosity of similarities, better than underline the differences that can aggravate to us and them narratives. This means that Psychologists should have a more active role in lobbying for Mental Health friendly communities and policies. I hope that we, being here, can do a small, but significant contribution to the movement of the integration of refugees in Europe.

To conclude, seeing refugees as an opportunity rather than a crisis, is helping Psychology to develop itself as a science and as a profession, as a very needed helping tool for people in suffering, as a way to make us, as humans, in our diversity, understand each other better, to be a promoter of peace speeches and integration, and above all to make communications more aware, resilient, educated and therefore heal -

thier. Thank You.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Thank you Mr. Bruno Brito, especially for being very strict to the time, it is very important, thank you so much. Well, I will now give the floor to the president of the Swedish Psychological Association, Mr. Anders Wahlberg. It is a pleasure to have you with us.

**Anders Wahlberg (President of Swedish Psychological Association and DG):** Thanks for the invitation, thanks to you both, for giving very important information in a very short time. If you have to make a consensus of everything **is that good Mental Health is the crucial thing to have a good integration and inclusion**, and we have a lot of experience from Sweden. In 2015 our prime minister said: "Open your arms". And we had a lot of migrants coming to Sweden, and the **Psychologists in Sweden have made a tremendous job**. Not only treatment, because treatment is this important thing, but it is almost impossible to treat everyone, but **they worked hard in schools, they worked in employment service, healthcare centers, camps for refugees**, and I think that is a very important place for Psychologists to be, to give information, knowledge on how to deal with Mental Health issues, how to deal with the integration, with the inclusion, things like that. So, **I think that we have to work with the treatment, but we also have to work with the promotion and prevention**, and knowledge to everyone working in those areas, and there we have a lot of information, a lot of knowledge. And I found that professionals in schools and employment centers they do not really have the knowledge, and that is crucial to make a good integration and inclusion. You mention about family separation and family reunion, and I am very happy now because our new government of the half-year, the new government, have decided to **easier the possibility to family reunion**, and we know from research that that is one of the crucial things or one of the main things that give mental illness if you cannot be with the family, and **I hope more European countries will follow that path**. Thank you.



**ANDERS WAHLBERG**

President of Swedish  
Psychological Association  
and DG

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Thank you so much. Indeed this is actually a challenge that I ever thought that we would face when we began this journey. At least taking into account the huge figures that, unfortunately, that we are facing today. And perhaps that will continue in the coming times. Now let us move on to the panel on Demography, Europe and Psychology Role in Well-Being and it is a pleasure also to present Mrs. Margarida Gaspar de Matos from the University of Lisbon.

### ***Demography, Europe and Psychology Role in Well-Being***

**Margarida Gaspar de Matos (FMH/ISAMB, University of Lisbon):** I would like to begin to congratulate the pro-ponents of this meeting and to thank for the invitation; it is a pleasure to be here. It is going to be a very short pleasure, because I timed myself for 4 minutes, and so I hope to do my best during this time. So, we, **Psychologists**, see ourselves as **behavioral scientists**, we deal with people in context of their own.

lives, where they are. Now in Europe people live longer and they have good life standards. It was not always like that, and it was not like that not very long ago. And elsewhere it is not like that yet, at this moment, and **we as Psychologists and as citizens, we have to think globally, not only from our point of view.**



MARGARIDA GASPAR  
DE MATOS

FMH / ISAMB, University  
of Lisbon

**Migration movements bring several challenges**, and we believe that **diversity can indeed be an asset**. Everybody tries to reach or keep good life standards, and well-being, and strive for economic growth, prosperity and happiness. Do not we all? But economic growth has a global environmental impact, with negative effects on health and well-being; it became unsustainable growth, devastating in global terms. Therefore, **we are in need, urgent need of balancing people well-being, economic growth and environmental protection**. And we need to do that **through sustainable actions**, we cannot do one action that solves a problem and creates another problem. And postponing the solutions forever, this is not building trust or hope within the populations. So, **what can we Psychologist do for helping?** We do not have a magical thing, but we do have procedures. **We can help promoting health and well-being**, but not from zero, people have their own strengths, and so we have to go there from where people are, from their context, and **we have to engage them**, as was told before, **to count on their active participation**, from their own assets.

**We have evidence-based approaches to build on population needs, motivation, but also competences, and to promote health and well-being through the life span**. I think that the generation thing it is a very important thing to build on, people are getting older, they are living more. We can do that through targeted campaigns and a lot of other procedures. We also have evidence-based approaches to promote health and well-being at several ecological levels or frames: families, schools, universities, workplaces, community organizations, governments, involving people globally, and for that we need the planet to focus on these actions.

We know that is very important, we Psychologists sometimes, do not care about that, but this is a very, very important skill, **we are trained to listen to people, and we can use their knowledge and their active participation, to find and implement out-of-the-box solutions to address societal challenges, promoting well-being**. We have several examples of that. As we, Psychologists, **have evidence-based procedures to collaborate with governments**, we know how to turn a public policy plan into a plan that gather support from the population, we know how to translate, and we can do that shift. **The field of behavioral economics** has a lot to offer, we can even help saving, we are value for cost, **we are of economic value**.

We, as Psychologists, consider **prevention and promotion as two sides of the same coin**. For us to target people well-being and people Mental Health, research and intervention must grow together. We are not just nice people, no, **we are scientists**.



If I was to list half of those **societal challenges for Europe this century**, I would say **well-being and Mental Health**, of course, which is why we are here, I would say **environmental protection**, I would say **sustainable growth**, but I would also say **trust, equity and hope for the future**.

We need happy and healthy people, and we need a healthy planet. We have every evidence what it means to collaborate mainly with preventing and promotion action in the area of wellbeing and behavioral change, with the participation both of the governments and the population, **if you need a translator between population and governments that is us**. Thank you very much.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Thank you Mrs. Margarida Gaspar de Matos, it is quite impressive the amount of good things and important things that we can say and express in just 6 minutes. Well, here in the European Parliament, usually it is 1 minute and half, 2 at the most. Well, now we will have the comments from Mr. Koen Lowet, the director of the Flemish Association for Clinical Psychologists, it is a pleasure having you here with us.

**Koen Lowet (Director for the Flemish Association for Clinical Psychologists):** Thank you Madame Chair and good afternoon everybody. Let me start by showing that I am one of the nice Psychologists, it is not a problem. I will make a short commentary, I will respect the time, so I will limit my commentary to focus on two levels, the micro-level and a more micro-level. Because, ladies and gentlemen, our society is changing in western Europe and in the whole of Europe **the population is ageing, our economic growth is stalling**, it is not growing as fast as it used to be, and so it means that, for most European countries, **our social security systems are changing**. We need to re-focus and re-think the way we build our social security systems and our health systems.

When we talk about the Mental Health scenario, to which Psychologists are most often linked to, we see that most of our Mental Health systems are still oriented to acute cure, with many hospital beds, which is a very expensive form of treating people. And as my colleague already explained we, as Psychologists and as researchers have demonstrated, over and over again, that **we can be very cost-effective**, if we focus more on the prevention and the promotion of Mental Health, on evidence-based interventions, I think that **we, as a group of Psychologists and as a science, can contribute to the social security systems that are under pressure nowadays**, due to the economic crisis and to the ageing of our population. This is on the micro-level, so I would encourage everybody to look into your Mental Health systems and your health systems, in general, in your countries, to start reforming and to start shifting focus to more prevention and promotion of well-being and Mental Health in your countries.



**KOEN LOWET**

Director for the Flemish  
Association for Clinical  
Psychologists

Also, on the micro-level, we already talked about the focus on Psychology as a science, and our subject as the human as a whole, my colleague has already explained that we not only focus on the individual, but we focus on the individual and its context. That means that we as a group of Psychologists, study humans, we think about how they think, how they behave, how they feel, how they interact with their

environment. And a lot of things that we have learned in our research could really **benefit and help the public health or public policy in general, to translate objectives and goals into explicit human behavior.** Because if you want to face these major challenges that we are talking about today, **then we need to change the behavior of our people in Europe and** more broadly also. Whether it is going to be on climate change, whether it is going to be on prevention of suicide, rather or not it is going to be Mental Health problems, it all comes down to human behavior, and that is our field and, ladies and gentlemen we, Psychologists, have a profound role to play in them. Most associations here around the table, that reunite Psychologists are also scientific associations, and their main task is not only to promote Psychology, but also disseminate knowledge that comes from psychological research to you, as a group of politicians or other stakeholders in the field. So, this is a great opportunity today for us to explain our goals, that we have today, and so thank you very much for the opportunity to organize this event.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** In just 50 seconds I would like to highlight also the need to address the **well-being of caregivers when we are talking about ageing** and we have been working on this at the European Parliament. Now, moving on to the other panel on Climate Change, Europe and Psychology role in Behavioral Change. I will now give the floor to Mr. Damien Mattis from the DG CLIMA, it is a pleasure having you with us.

**Damien Mattis (DG CLIMA):** Thank you, and it is a pleasure to be here this afternoon, and I will make sure I keep the time. **Climate change, I do not just want to talk about behavioral change, but also behavior.** The science of climate change has been clear for a very long time. Lyndon Johnson spoke to Congress in 1965, over 50 years ago, so when you see Trump tweeting this week that is cold in Chicago, while it is basically breaking records in Paraguay, Argentina and Australia, it gives me depression. The challenge we have is enormous, I worked on climate change for most of the last 20 years and there is a genuine question we have in the office, how far will we pretend that everything is fine? Because if you look at CO2 levels we are now off the scale 411 parts per million, that Kyoto and Europe were happy with. The Paris Agreement was a public relations triumph, but the truth is that China, the US, Russia, India, they are not interested in legally binding constraints in the same way as Europe, so we have European laws to achieve a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels, **we are acting in Europe.** But if you look at Paris as a whole, we are heading towards 3° to 4° C warming by the end of the century, we did not evolve in these conditions, it will be catastrophic.



**So, what to do?** In Europe governments have enrolled the European Parliament, and member states have been very active in providing incentives, we live in a market economy, companies make money, we need to direct them in the right direction, **this is not about individual guilt, it is not about villains.** We did it on the ozone layer, we avoided catastrophic damage, we can do it on climate. There is a quote not from Trump, but Obama at the bottom of this slide, about getting price signals to get our economies to move in the right direction, working with groups that need more support to do so. In terms of the challenges, you see Rutherford Bregman getting a lot of press in the last days for saying at Davos “The house is on fire”.

I looked back and Jacques Chirac said this in 2002. We know for 150 years what we are doing in terms of changing the composition of the atmosphere, and so one question I have is how to maintain optimism? Is it the case that we have to pretend that we are globally on track?

**How to achieve behavioral changes?** Clearly individual food patterns, I have never seen agriculture as the villains here, but the issue is as how individuals can cope with this, what they should do, anxiety, and depression. And also, the roles of everyone, because is not the individuals' role to internalize carbon prices and shipping. There are levels at which we can do different things, where the Europe Parliament is a huge important level, because Portugal alone, Malta alone, they cannot take these policies, the politicians, there are pressures on these. On the other hand, the United Nations, I think Paris recognized that the UN is not going to take over the world, they will not going to impose carbon taxes, I think this is one of the reasons the Coke brothers and other deny climate change, is they think we are eco-socialists. That is not the case; **I mean a social democracy can tackle climate change**, so this issue is one I have worked on quite a lot, of trying to **get different levels of actors to work**. But there are huge issues here, I would love to have further follow-up and I am very glad that the psychological organizations are interested in this issue, thank you.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Well, I can only say to you good luck. Well, now I know that the Psychologists have been studying that and we have been talking yesterday, had a very interesting chat on the impacts of climate change and the relations to people. So now I will give the floor to David Uzzell, from the University of Sussex.

**David Uzzell (University of Sussex):** Thank you very much. I would begin by saying that I think **Psychology has much to offer to policy makers as to effectively changing behaviors in respect to climate change**. I am sure you would all be familiar with the familiar methods targeting and tailoring messages, giving feedback which reinforces behaviors, using appropriate language. I always put this in terms of **making messages personal, immediate, concrete and local, rather than talking in very abstract terms about saving the planet**. Using social networks, encouraging social norms, these are all very effective.



**DAVID UZZELL**

University of Sussex

I think there is more interest in **direct routes to behavior change**, for example, **research on communities**, which has found that in communities where there is higher degrees of social cohesion, and place identity, they tend to engage in more environmental sustainable actions, which may be more pervasive and long lasting. We also have a great deal of knowledge about **barriers to change**. For many people their **identities** are intimately tied to their work and professions, threatening particular industries, for example, transport with carbon reducing legislation or threatening jobs, which in turn may threaten identities. When peoples' identities are threatened, they are likely to resist. The promotion by trade unions of a just transition to a greener economy advocates not only new jobs, but jobs which facilitate the emergency of positive identities in the context of carbon reduced production.

If I have a challenge, I think it will be we cannot get rid of this word 'global'. **The language we use, frames the way we think about the possibilities for action, we talk of global warming, global environmental change, and this encourages people to feel powerless, because how can they influence global processes, where is the global?** The global is also local, the global is here. People not only feel powerless when global environmental problems are discussed, but they think that national and international agencies are the most appropriate bodies for taking action. The research we have done in Australia, Slovakia and the UK demonstrates that people think environmental problems are much more serious at the global level, than the local level. **Changing environmental dimension actions may simply be the presenting symptoms of more chronic issues derived from our lifestyles and everyday practices.** We shall look into the infrastructure of our everyday lives, so if the environmental and social conditions in context of peoples' lives do not permit behavior change, than no amount of persuasion, education, incentives, or identity work, to encourage people to reduce energy consumptions, for example, would be effective. And that explains, for example, things about the way we design our cities, the way we make and promote products.

The second point I want to put under this heading, is that I would like to say something about the **behavior of organizations**. In our research for the EEU with a major multinational company, we found that laws and regulations **often act as boundaries of permissiveness rather than drivers for change**. In other order, regulations become the upper limit as to what an organization or an industry should do, (for example, pollution levels), rather than the minimum standard or an aspirational starting point to significant changes in environmental processes. And this of course may be no less relevant for the individual. **Too often we are told that the solutions to climate change involve giving things up, it is a negative message, and negative messages are much more likely to fail.** We know from psychological research that people regret a loss more than value a gain. Too often behavior change campaigns give the impression of putting the environment first, means putting the individual second, in other words environmental benefits of the collective level would necessitate a sacrifice in individuals' living standards, happiness and their immediate good life. And **narratives should be about gain and opportunity, not loss**, which in part echoes something that Bruno was saying.

**Climate change is a collective problem and it will only be solved through collective action, we need more social participative models**, in which governments involve and work with people. **People should not be seen as a group to be persuaded and coerced, but as partners in creative, rewarding, solution generating, decision making and implementation processes.** Again, that is something that Mairead said earlier on.

And the last point I would make is that part of **our vision has to extend beyond climate change, and motivate us to see opportunities for societal change and transformation that address other social issues**, and many inequalities we face at the local and global levels.

**Climate change is a threat, but we should frame it as an opportunity.** A good example of that might be to think of community energy projects, for example, which leads to a reduction in energy bills, production in carbon emissions, increase energy security, but they also lead to social cohesion, community participation and empowerment, jobs and skills development. And often these have a spill over into food and transport initiatives.

So, to conclude, I tried to argue that **Psychology can be more than just about behavior change** and persuading people to turn off the lights, it can ask challenging questions, and out of those questions, **may come policies and strategies that will enable individuals, communities and societies, not only to endure and survive, but also to flourish.** There is an inseparable relationship between a healthy environment, a healthy society and a healthy individual. Thank you very much.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Thank you Mr. David Uzzell for the enlightenment, very



interesting comments. And then for the final comments on this, I will try to say it well, I would like to present Mr. Sarb Bajwa the chief executive of British Psychological Society. It is a pleasure to have you here.

**Sarb Bajwa (Chief Executive of British Psychological Society):** Thank you. Good afternoon everybody, I will be brief. I just want to touch upon that last point that David mentioned about positive messages. From kind of a different context, I work in the UK and we sent out lots of messages about “having casual sex is going to kill you”. It led to no behavioral change; it was only when we started to shift the message to protect you for that matter, that it demonstrated a change in behaviors. So there are really lots of evidence, I think, about positive messages and how they can be used.



**SARB BAJWA**

Chief Executive of British Psychological Society

Moving aside from that, I think Psychology is being linked to Mental Health an awful lot, and in a sense, I want to say something that may or may not be controversial, because I think **Psychologists are intimately concerned with peoples' minds and behavior, so therefore is wider than just Mental Health.** I may find that this reflect on my organization, we represent 151 networks or groups of experts, if you like, and they cover everything from cyberpsychology, Mental Health, community Psychology to environmental Psychology. **So, if one of the purposes of this day is to raise awareness amongst decision makers about the value that Psychology can bring, my key message is we can contribute in an awful lot, hugely wide area, let us not stop at Mental Health and well-being, we are much bigger than that.**

I certainly think that, in terms of the UK government, it is starting to listen to Psychologists a little bit more, and it is interesting that around this table climate change has been mentioned at least two or three times, and I think that is ultra-interesting when you read the IPCC, which is certainly an area that I am familiar with. The three work teams they have focus on three things, one is around the physical science, one is around the impact of social economic and natural systems and one is around mitigation. But **what seems to be missing from all of that is people, and I think that is what needs to be focused on, and that is what psychological can bring to that debate.** And to give you a personal example about how, I used to work for the energy industry that was working in the fossil fuel area and we worked hard to try and develop a game that allowed consumers to look at their behavior and modify it in some way. Very quickly within a few weeks of launching it, we realized that we needed an expert because we did not know what to do. And it was actually interesting when I spoke to somebody who worked in the games who developed that game Candy Crush, he said “This is rubbish, they get no feedback, and they get no positive reinforcement”. So, Psychology can really bring an insight into that.

So for me, I think there are kind of a couple key messages there, one is that I think the Psychology is broader than Mental Health and well-being. I think the biggest challenge we face is climate change, it is not just restricted to energy use, **but it is about how we work, how we live, what we do for relax it touches**

in every aspect of our lives, and so for my perspective I would argue and urge policy makers to work in those areas to ensure that the contribution of Psychology is considered when they are developing policies. To give you another example, we are campaigning hard in the UK to make sure that every government policy carries out a **Mental Health impact assessment**, to what could the potential effects be on individuals, on a community or on a society. Thank you.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Well to what concerns climate change and the European policies, yesterday the Portuguese Psychologists Association had a meeting with the Commissioner Kalniete and we have managed, I think that this was, I hope, the first major achievements, they are now starting to work together with the commission and even they are going to be present and make a presentation at next consumers quorum, that the commission is preparing every year. So, it is good news for now. Well, now let us move, and now we are ok, from now on, with the time, which means still that we need to be strict on time, let us move on to the next panel, which is the Employment, Europe and Psychology role in labor market integration. Let me now present Mrs. Katarina Ivankovic – Knezevic from DG EMPL, the director for social affairs from the European Commission. Thank you for coming.

## ***Employment, Europe and Psychology Role in Labor Market Integration***

**Katarina Ivankovic–Knezevic (DG EMPL Director for Social Affairs, European Commission):** Thank you so much for being here, and I apologize for being a little bit late, but I still managed in time to be here. If I can share with you what I noticed since I came, I think all the Psychologists around the table said that we will keep the time and the rest of us, I guess, we do not have to be so strict about the time, but I will try to be strict anyhow. So, when it comes to the topic related to employment and Europe, and being last at the agenda, does not mean that you are last to come, I think this is only giving the importance of this topic and the role of workers, and role that you as Psychologists could play and are playing actually in the labour market.



For us, in the DG Employment, and we have been quite known for recognizing this and **put the psychological risks highly in the agenda**, and this are really challenges related to the occupational safety and health, and indeed they have a significant impact on the health of individuals, on organizations and national economies in general. It is clear that **negative working environment and excessive job strain**, as a result of interaction between high job demands and job resources, **may lead to psychic and Mental Health problems**, this is the thesis that I want you to start with. They are also fully aware that a good Mental Health is a critical part of the individual well-being. I am very happy that we had the discussion about the well-being a little bit, just before, and I am happy that our Finnish colleagues took the economy of well-being as the priority for their presidency. We hope many aspects are going to be brought up within the economy of well-being and **seeing a worker as a complete human being with all the different aspects**,

and also putting the perspective of happiness, of health, of [Psychological Health](#) in the perspective as well.

We also like to share with you what we identified as one of the [possible obstacles](#) and this comes with a digitalization and privatization, we all speak about the future of work, how it will change, how it will come. Are we prepared to cope with this? Do we have enough examples of changing working environments, about some jobs disappearing, who is prepared? How is prepared? But I also would like to ask one question to all of you, are the Psychologists prepared for these changes? Do we speak about sufficient workforce? Because well, I am a daughter of a Psychologist and a pedagogue, and my whole life I heard my mother saying “We do not have enough Psychologists, we do not have enough Psychologists in pre-school education, in educational system. We are not paying attention to creating well-being human beings. We do not have enough in the work-related medicine; we do not have enough Psychologists”. So, my question is, what are we going to do about this?

Funding came to the question; I think funding is definitely something we have to look upon. Now we are at the stage that this year is crucial, next year will be crucial for what? For programming European funds, for adopting new MFF, and for making sure that this topic come into the picture. We speak about new addictions, we speak about children being addicted on the internet games, [are we sure that we have enough Psychologists who will be dealing with this?](#)

Being a policy maker in one of the member states, for many years, and leading the employment service, I will tell you, I never saw unemployed psychologists, they go like this, as many as you produce them, it is supplied driven economy, when it comes to the Psychologists.

Also, these new challenges that are occurring from the digitalization, from the news forms, from the platform work; do we have information which is psychological risks of the platform work? Please also think about [upskilling, skilling, reskilling](#). We do not speak about the general qualification as skills, here we really need to dig a little deeper.

So, to come back on the European Commission, indeed we do a lot, we have the EU strategic framework on health and safety at work, in the communications safer and healthier work for all, we tackle especially psychological risks at the work place. In 2014/2015 we launched a campaign on the health and safety at work in order to prevent stress and psychological risks at the workplace. Last year, in December, we also published a practical guide for small businesses to [prevent psychosocial risks](#) and muscle-skeleton disorders [at the workplace](#). So, there are those that pay attention, there are those that care, but I think we really need to see the whole picture, we really need to dig from the beginning, to something that I would also like to open a bit, and this is something that my director is dealing directly, and this is the role of Mental Health and disability. You probably know better than me that the court of justice has ruled that the concept of disability may include certain illnesses related to Psychological Health. This creates also an additional challenge, and this also requires us from the Commission perspective to push the inclusion of such occurrences and such aspects in our disability strategies. We will be revising the European disability strategy next year actually, and we will be preparing new ones, so we better take care that is included. It is also important as the disability strategies are going to be one of the enabling conditions in the future. So, the member states should pay also attention and we have to push and we have to insist that they are taken on board. So, I hope I did not take too much of the time, and I also have an excuse of not being Psychologist as well, but close to one. And thank you so much.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Well and working very closely with Commissioner Tyson, she has been very sensitive to these questions and she has really included those questions into really politics, and she is making the difference on the social Europe, and that is good news. I will now give the floor to Mrs. Angela Carter from the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology.

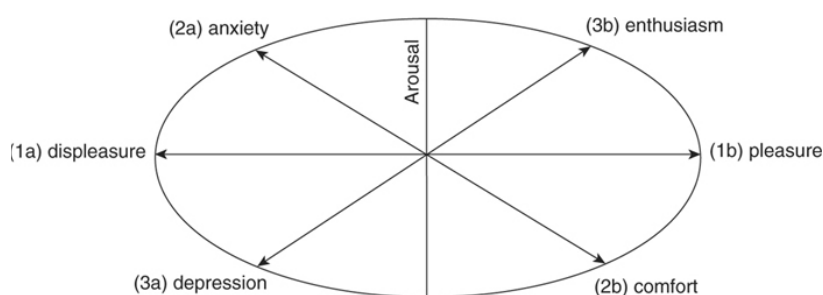
Thank you for coming.

**Angela Carter (European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology):** I have a short amount of time and far too many slides, but what I want to perhaps address is Katarina last point: **we can magnify the impact of Psychology by being simple in our messages, and translating them to other people.** And having a forum such as this is the beginning of that conversation about what we can do with policy makers. I welcome very much the opportunity to have this conversation with you, to offer some suggestions of what we might offer, and I hope to debunk some rather complicated models I am going to show you, that are quite simple actually. I am going to restrict myself to talk about two opposing views about work, **the intensification work**, that we are all involved in, and **the simplification work**. And these are **two sides of the same coin of what is happening to the working population at the moment**. One is building Mental Health issues, the other one, also creating Mental Health issues.



So, if we look at the complexity, the intensification of work nowadays, just think about the work you do, think about what it was like 10 years ago, I bet it has changed, I bet you have many more things to do now, priorities, how can you make these priorities? How many people do you relate to inside your organization or outside of the organizations? These have become hugely complicated nowadays. And of course, we are now much more time and resource short. I do not need to say much more about that one, do I? So, what happens with these long hours of work, this complexity of work, our decision making becomes less good, we do not prioritize well, and if you are leaders in our field, that means that we do not help those that we are leading, performance becomes compromised.

**As Psychologists** we can often do very simple and sensible models to take this conversation on, but also to **enable those in positions of leadership and management to understand how they can help others**. Let me just take you to what looks like a complicated model, it is not, this is Peter Warr Circumplex Model of Well-Being. Anybody is familiar with this? It is very common, so I suspected you are... I'm seeing some nods, thank you.



Warr, P., Bindl, U.K., Parker, S.K. and Inceoglu, I., 2014. Four-quadrant investigation of job-related affects and behaviours.

European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 23(3), pp.342-363.



The right-hand side of this model is the positive feeling of well-being, you are happy, you are involved, the left-hand side the negative sides of this. This is much, much more detailed than happiness, and I think the economists and the action of the happiness need to think about these issues. What I think is hugely important is the up and down axis here. This is the simplest thing we can enable, supervisors, workers, leaders to understand, when I start go quiet, they disengage, and there are problems at work. This has going up slowly, and I do not really want anything about the Brexit stuff to come out here, but I am giving a coded message here, **the way we can work well together is to have engaging leadership, people that think and listen about who they are working with, people that listen to the issues they have**, and then quite importantly look at the bottom right petal, as I would call it, **moving forward together**. And I think this is an important path to supporting well-being in the workplace.

Finally, I want to introduce you to something interesting, American Psychologists came up with these idea years ago: I think we focus tremendously on the fact that not all stresses are that bad for us, I would not say they are good stress, but we know there are things that are positive engaging. The left-hand side there, we quite enjoy beating that high work load, coping with ambiguity that I did not know my colleague was going to say or help the discussion with this. But this are challenges we rise to, this is actually the good stress in our workplace. Look on the right-hand side, these are the things that politicians deal with all day and we do as leaders. Roll ambiguity, not knowing what we are meant to do, organizational politics, do they really matter? And have we got job in the new technology that is coming in the future? This is very much worrying people.

And these are the opportunities we have in this conversation, to work the ways we can help decision makers and policy makers improve these activities. So, what is the other side of the coin? The growth of atypical work that is people doing things like zero hour contracts, riding bikes delivering things, this growth as, I would say, quadrupled this last couple of years. And here we are looking at people who often are very skilled doing very de-skilled work. Can you imagine what is like to be university graduate wearing a bunny suit walking down the high street, engaging people in conversation that is a lot of my graduates do. Yeah? Within months they have lost their skills, the interpersonal skills, they have lost their ability to talk to people about work, and unfortunately what happens is they become stigmatized in that type of work relationships. So, employers I know, go: "Ah, I will not touch anyone like that. I do not work with him". However, they have got tremendous skills of resilience, how to you think you deal to being laughed in the street when you look like that? So, I think we have a lot of work there to do with employers, to make this work understandable, but to generate good work. The model here that underpins this, for me, is Peter Warr model, which really means, what are the characteristics of work that enable us to survive? And if you look at these ones that are in blue, I think all of those, that is 10 of them actually are compromised by atypical working, limited personal control, limited skill use and acquisition of new skills, valued social position. So, we need to be giving a strong message to people who are generating many, many levels of atypical work, many of our young people having to experience nowadays, just make those jobs a bit richer.

And I think at that point there, I will leave to say thank you for this opportunity, I rather demonstrated that you can talk simply about psychological models and there is much more we can do together, thank you.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** And you have shown to us how you can also touch our hearts as well, with those simple models. And to close this panel, I will now present Mr. Oscar Cortizo, from the Universidade Cardenal Herrera, which is the vice president of Colegio Oficial de Psicólogos (COP) - Valencia. Thank you .

**Oscar Cortizo (Universidad CEU-Cardenal Herrera; Vice-President of COP Valencia):** Thank you. Muchas gracias Sra. Sofia Ribeiro y gracias también a Francisco Miranda Rodrigues por la invitación. Vuelvo a complimentar la magnífica exposición de la Sra. Ángela simplemente unas reflexiones porque

poco minutos. El entorno que estamos viviendo es un entorno de un **envejecimiento de la población** muy relevante. **Hay cambios en la organización de trabajo y los estilos de vida**, como comentábamos, por la digitalización y otros factores. Hay una diversidad generacional con una coincidencia de 3 generaciones, prácticamente en una misma organización, y esto también pues exige que aparezcan nuevos perfiles y desaparezcan también estos perfiles con la precariedad que se apuntaba por ahí. Hay una competitividad **y va a haber una competitividad cada vez mayor en Europa por el talento y el compromiso de los trabajadores** y, en ese sentido, la **Psicología** pues tiene unos retos de, justamente, esa globalización, **movilidad del talento**. Ese **gap generacional**, ese **gap también digital**, porque el porcentaje más importante de la población activa en Europa, sobre todo en muchos países, va a ser justamente generaciones más mayores y que, por lo tanto, ese GAP, esa diferencia digital, esa brecha digital va a generar que probablemente la productividad, si no se aplica desde la Psicología y se facilitan herramientas y se enfoca a las personas nos podemos encontrar pues con una población activa menos productiva y por lo tanto que ponga en riesgo el PIB de los países europeos y por tanto también en riesgo las prestaciones sociales que son necesarias para justamente esas cotizaciones.



**OSCAR CORTIZO**

Universidad CEU-Cardenal Herrera;  
Vice-President of COP  
Valencia

Ya para finalizar, yo creo que **es fundamental también la generación de entornos laborales saludables** porque también va vinculado a ese envejecimiento de la población en Europa. Y, como conclusión, justo en un momento histórico de cambios sustanciales por la digitalización, las personas, por todo lo comentado anteriormente se convierten en factor clave para todas las políticas en el área de recursos humanos, no sé la traducción pero a mí, el concepto recursos humanos me gusta, considerar a las personas como un recurso, es mucho más allá, mucho más integral y desde un punto de vista político la exigencia de cambios normativos y de regulación laboral que se adapten a los nuevos tiempos. La **Psicología** ha demostrado a lo largo de los años, mediante la investigación y su aplicación a las organizaciones que aportan una visión estratégica no solamente técnica, **donde pone el foco en las personas para incrementar la empleabilidad, la productividad y la calidad de vida** desde un punto de vista ético de los ciudadanos. Trabajar para que estas distintas generaciones que integran una organización estén comprometidas con ese engagement, formadas y capacitadas para anticiparse a las necesidades exigentes del entorno, va a ser crítico para la productividad de las empresas y por lo tanto para la sostenibilidad del sistema como comentaba de las prestaciones sociales en Europa.

En definitiva, **la Psicología va a ser clave en los próximos años para la economía europea** y, justamente con la humanización de la gestión empresarial, **poner el foco en las personas es una gestión ética pero cada vez es más productiva**. Muchas gracias.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Gracias. It is a pleasure for me to say that for the first time we have a Portuguese leading the European Federation of Psychology Association (EFPA), so it is really a pleasure to present to you Telmo Mourinho Baptista, you do have the floor, please, to conclude all

of this panel, which is not easy, because have you seen there were 18 interventions in less than 2 hours, so we are all to congratulate you on that.

# CLOSING

**Telmo Mourinho Baptista (President of the European Federation of Psychologists Associations, EFPA):** Good afternoon, thank you very much. First of all, thank you very much for organizing this session in the European Parliament, it is a landmark of course. And also thank you to Francisco Miranda Rodrigues, to also making all the effort to bring us together here and all the people that are here. Well, the title, European Psychology to face European society major challenges, it is very important, but I didn't know why. I think now we know why, it is easier, why we are a resource and very helpful, from what we heard, and these are only some examples of areas that we deal with. And these are also examples that are important, they are very important.



**TELMO MOURINHO  
BAPTISTA**

President of the European  
Federation of Psychologists  
Associations, EFPA

What we see is people behaving in different contexts and situations, and Psychologists are behavioral scientists, as my colleague Margarida said, and practitioners. [Everyday Psychologists deal with human behavior and of course the mind that sets the intention for these behaviors.](#) Psychologists deal not just with the individual persons, but also with groups, organizations, communities and also help establish policies. The most common misconception is to reduce Psychology to individual behavior, Mental Health and clinical consultations, when it is much more than that. These are probably the most salient aspects shown in films and television, but Psychology interventions go far beyond that, and we have a very clear understanding here today of what we can contribute. There is, of course, an important role for Mental Health: Mental Health disorders are by far, the largest contributor to chronic conditions, affecting the population of Europe. The neuropsychological disorders are the first cause of years lived with disability. And unipolar depressive disorder is the leading chronic condition in Europe. We had all the different positions here that stated how this happens in many different populations. Every year Mental Health affects more than 1/3 of the European population, it is more 164.000.000 people. And one in every four European citizens are at risk of having a mental disease. And the global burden of mental disease in Europe is now 600 billion. The depression alone accounts for 135 billion.

So we have the data, we do not need to go further collecting these; we need to understand what we can do with this and make people conscious about this situation. But as we have seen today, also, there are lots of implications from the suicidal rate of the farmers that we saw here, to addressing the inclusion of

refugees in Europe, the main concern of all Europeans, the consequences of demographical change, change in behavior to stop climate change, promoting employment in the labor market, these are important concerns. And I think that mine distinguished colleagues presented very well how Psychology can contribute.

[Psychology can help attain sustainable development goals](#) that were signed by the United Nations countries, and this is something that Europe, of course, is part of, and that is a project for the next years until 2030. And not just for the third goal, the health lives and well-being for all ages, prevention and treatment and promotion of Mental Health well-being, this is an important goal, but we can hope in all goals, like inclusive and equitable quality in education, goal four, or gender equality and empower all women and girls. In every goal we can add a role that is really important. Learning issues, guaranteeing success, raising consciousness for underprivileged situations. This is something that we can all contribute.

We are, of course, present in many areas of our life, and now we come to another issue that is really very important: [artificial intelligence](#). It is taking the world in many different areas, and it promises to change the world as we know it. It is already present in many areas of our life, without we even noticing it, many decisions are took by algorithms, derived from deep learning over which we do not have any kind of control. [And the decision-making process needs a human intervention, a close loop to guarantee that ethical guidelines are used in the development of artificial intelligence](#). The document that will come from the present consultation of the European Commission is something that is very, very important, the ethical guidelines for trustworthy AI, and it comes back to the word trust, that we need so much. It will be a milestone, not only for Europe and the world, and I encourage you to contribute to this discussion.

[We have accumulated a wide body of knowledge based on research and sustained by evidence](#); we need to be able to generate more research in order to develop more sophisticated conclusions that will help [develop interventions at the different levels and also policies](#). We have also accumulated the wide body of tests, practices, that cover interventions, but also [prevention and promotion of behaviors](#). [We must not forget the place of prevention in dealing with Europe's problems](#). In all these areas and contexts, we see people in action, people behaving alone, together, in groups, I know that implementation is difficult, but we know how to deal with this, to transform a plan into some actions. And also know about denial, if we are thinking about climate, and we know that denial it is not just a river in Egypt, it is much more than that.

Psychology studies behavior and gives an important contribution to promote change. [I think we can all agree that to reach the important objectives that we selected, we have to change, we need to change, and we need urgently to change our behaviors as persons, groups, organizations or communities](#). [Psychology can help](#). That is why we should consider including psychological knowledge in all policies, this is very close to our hearts as Psychologists to understand people and their behavior, and help them attain the objective of well-being. This can be done with participation, individual and collective behaviors that will lead us towards more peace, prosperity and well-being. Psychologists are at you side, thank you very much.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** Thank you, Telmo Baptista for your marvelous closing re-marks. That was so broaden. And to close, I would like deeply to thank my team, my assistants, Claudia, and my head of office Paulo Nascimento Cabral, without them especially without the work of Paulo which is a Psychologist himself; you cannot imagine my life without the Psychologists.

**Paulo Cabral:** It is a better life.

**Sofia Ribeiro (European Parliament Deputy):** It is. Without them that could not be possible. Saying that I really hope that this is the first of several initiatives that we can have together, between the European institutions and the Psychologists' associations, so that we can really pursue for a more social Europe. Thank you to all.





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