

Lausanne, the 3rd January 2024

Dear representatives of the National Associations members of EMDR Europe,  
Dear Chairs and vice-chairs of the Committees of EMDR Europe,  
Dear Colleagues,

At the beginning of 2024, I would like to wish you all as well as your loved ones a very Happy New Year.

We may feel it difficult to think of wishes of happiness in the context of numerous conflicts in Europe and in the World: the ongoing war in Ukraine, the recent terrorist attack in Israel, the war in Gaza, the refugees' crisis in Armenia, not to forget the many military conflicts around the world that force thousands of refugees to embark on a dangerous journey, looking for safety in European countries.

We may agree or disagree with the decisions of our respective governments in relation to these conflicts and crisis, and in some countries, expressing disagreement may lead a person being imprisoned, or worse. This relates to our roles as citizen while, as mental health professionals, we pursue the aims of EMDR Europe Association.

Because EMDR was first recognized as a trauma therapy, we have a tradition of assistance to those suffering from military conflicts, natural disasters, such as the earthquake in Turkey, or man-made disasters, such as the mass shooting in Prague's university. It was Francine Shapiro's vision that EMDR therapy could reduce and prevent the transfer of trauma from one generation to the next, and in doing so, building trust between people and nations, and helping to create the conditions for lasting peace. In that regard the creation of the new Committee on EMDR Early Psychological Intervention for Crisis and Disasters is a reaction to the increasing demand of emergency response to multiple crisis in Europe and a logical consequence of experiences and actions undertaken by EMDR Europe in the last years.

In the recent years EMDR has been considered a psychotherapeutic approach. There is a growing scientific recognition for its positive effect on many mental disorders. With the Adaptive Information Processing model, we actively participate in the change of perspective in favour of a trauma-based transdiagnostic approach of mental health – shifting from “what is wrong with you?” to “what happened to you?”

Child sexual abuse, child physical abuse and neglect, family violence, and other adverse childhood events are the main experiential factors of physical and mental health issues for children, adolescents, and adults, while the public and many political decision makers tend to look away from these serious and costly issues.

As associations of mental health professionals, we inform the political decision makers and the public of all issues influencing mental health. As associations of EMDR therapists, we inform on the benefit of using EMDR therapy for a wide range of



disorders. This is what you do in your respective countries, and this is the collective task that we take on us at the European level.

The Executive Committee starts this new year with the same high commitment to develop further EMDR therapy and the prestige of EMDR Europe. We know that each of you does the same in your country.

We continue our activities in the lobbies of the European Parliament in association with important stakeholders.

Our communication strategy is starting to bring its benefits. With this New Year message, we send you the first of a series of videos that will show what EMDR Europe is. The first video presents the transition of presidency and the importance to have more EMDR Europe practitioners. Other videos are coming soon. Please share these videos with your members <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ip7X5PcteQo>

EMDR Europe is also more than ever before connected with the other Regional Associations. The EMDR Global Alliance – The International Society for EMDR Therapy is now registered and unites EMDR Africa, EMDR Asia, EMDR South America and the Caribbean, as well as EMDR Middle East-North Africa/Arab countries. EMDR New Zealand and EMDR Australia are associate members. The EMDR Global Alliance is proud to gather National and Regional Associations from all around the world, working together for the development of EMDR therapy, and respecting each regional association as an equal partner. We are in the process of developing common criteria for trainings, trainers, consultants, and practitioners. Isabel Fernandez is the first Chair of the Global Alliance, Andre Montero (Brazil) is the Vice-Chair and Reyhana Sedat (South Africa) is the Treasurer.

EMDR Europe starts this New Year with a strong hope that EMDR therapy will further develop within democratic, strong et safe organizational structures, in Europe and in the World. It is also our goal to strengthen further EMDR Europe as a synonym of quality and high scientific standards.

I wish for your National Association a successful New Year, bringing EMDR therapy a step further, for the good of the public and for the mental health of the population.

With my warm wishes for a Happy 2024,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'OPM', written in a cursive style.

Olivier Piedfort-Marin Ph.D.  
President  
EMDR Europe Association