

Slovenia

Psychotherapy in Slovenia

There is no law for psychotherapy in Slovenia, nor any other form of legal regulation of the profession of psychotherapy. This is not for lack of trying.

Between 2006 and 2010 the Ministry of Health formed a working group for preparing a draft law. But by the time the working group had finished its work, the Minister of Health changed and as the new Minister was not in favour of it, he 'left it in the drawer'.

Since then there have been various attempts and initiatives to renew the process of creating legislation for psychotherapy. The situation within the profession has also changed and as a result there are now three major professional organizations which individually provide for some kind of regulation of their membership:

1. the Slovene NAO – the Slovene Umbrella Association for Psychotherapy (SKZP) has collective membership uniting National Associations of different psychotherapeutic schools under one umbrella association. These are: reality therapy, gestalt therapy, psychodynamic and psychoanalytic psychotherapy, transactional analysis, systemic psychotherapy, integrative therapy, integrative psychotherapy, logotherapy, dance movement therapy, psychodrama). Within our NAO we have created a Register of holders of the European Certificate of Psychotherapy (ECP) and of the Slovene Diploma in Psychotherapy (SDP). Recently we have adopted the EAP criteria as the basis for continuous professional development and which now serve as the criteria for renewal of registration every five years.
2. the Association of Psychotherapists of Slovenia (ZPS). This association unites mainly but not solely clinical psychologists and psychiatrists who work within the National Health System and its membership is individual. In the past there was some co-operation between ZPS and SKZP but this ended following a change of leadership in ZPS. Both organizations had their representatives in the above mentioned working group in the Ministry of Health.
3. the Slovene Association of Psychotherapists and Counsellors (SZPS). This association was formed in 2017. It has individual membership and unites psychotherapists and counsellors graduating from the following three universities: the Sigmund Freud University for Psychotherapeutic Science of Ljubljana, the Theological Faculty of the University of Ljubljana and the Faculty for Applicable

Social Studies of the University of Nova Gorica.

In Spring 2017 the Ministry of Health sent to all professional organizations considered relevant for the field of psychotherapy (including the Slovene NAO) a requirement to choose their representatives for a new working group to legalise the field of psychotherapy. The group met four times in 2018 but its work was hindered as the medical side (representatives of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists) obstructed its work. However, the representatives of the above mentioned three universities and the Slovene NAO working together produced their own draft of the Psychotherapy Law, together with all the necessary supporting documentation required for passing it into law through the parliamentary procedure. Unfortunately, this draft was once again left in the drawer by the Ministry of Health as had happened previously with the draft from 2010, without any explanation. The Ministry has since then wrapped itself in silence. Perhaps like the proverbial ostrich hoping that by burying its head in the sand the challenging issue will go away.

The result of this is that Slovenia still does not have any legal regulation for the profession of psychotherapy. A Resolution under the National Programme for Mental Health was passed by parliament in 2018 and it included a programme for a law on psychotherapy which should have been put before parliament in 2019 and implemented in 2020. The Resolution remains valid until 2028 and during that time there will no doubt be new ministers of health so we try to remain optimistic that the situation may change.

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