



**President Patricia Hunt FRSA  
European Association for Psychotherapy**

**“Ukrainians are standing up for the highest principles of humanity.”  
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**On the eve of the joint USP and EAP Symposium on Ethics on Friday February 24th 2023, which is the anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian journalists were interviewed by Patricia Hunt FRSA, President of the European Association for Psychotherapy. While talking to the media Ms Patricia talked about the EAP during the crisis, cooperation with Ukrainian colleagues and the challenges facing psychotherapists.**

**1. Dear *Madam Patricia*, let's talk about the challenges and changes that the last few years have brought to all of us. The pandemic, the coronavirus, significant economic changes, finally, the war, natural disasters, the increasingly obvious human impact on nature in everyday life... The list goes on. Have the demands on psychotherapists changed in this regard? And the work of a psychotherapist?**

The demands on Psychotherapists increased at the time of the pandemic and coronavirus. This was due to the fact that many people became mentally ill due to being unable to conduct their normal lives, and being forced to be in their homes all the time. The profession of Psychotherapy has responded magnificently to this challenge, and I feel very proud of EAP Psychotherapists for the work they have done during the pandemic.

EAP conducted a survey of European Psychotherapists to find out how they had conducted their work during the pandemic. Nearly all Psychotherapists reported that they had changed their way of working from face to face therapy, to online therapy. They reported that they made this change in order to be able to help people in need across Europe during the pandemic. They had to learn how to conduct Psychotherapy effectively online, and EAP gave them help and support through guidance, materials and advice available on our website.

Psychotherapists reported that they had learned how to conduct Psychotherapy effectively online. They also said that once the pandemic was over, they will offer both face to face and online Psychotherapy. So this change is significant and lasting.

The demands on Psychotherapists have increased due to the impact of the increased cost of living triggering mental health problems. The demands on Psychotherapists have increased due to the impact of the climate crisis triggering climate anxiety. The demands on Psychotherapists have increased due to the impact of war triggering existential fear and profound uncertainty and anxiety.

2. The outbreak of war on the European continent in the 21st century is something that is impossible to imagine in one's right mind. Although we may be a thousand kilometers away from each other, information technology makes us very close. Therefore, war is a shock that cannot but affect each of us. "Us" means all Europeans in general. According to some studies, sociologists record the presence in society of such feelings as uncertainty, solidarity, empathy, and irritation. But sociologists are not psychologists. What changes or trends do you notice?

Psychotherapists have also observed the reactions of uncertainty, and of empathy with Ukrainians. The other things we have observed are extraordinary acts of kindness, for example, the number of people who have opened their homes to families who have had to flee the country for their own safety. Also the remarkable way in which legal systems of other countries have quickly made adaptations so that social benefits and education are available to Ukrainians living in their countries. This is very different to the treatment of those from Iraq, Syria and other countries.

We have also observed fear, that the world order will break down and that the fact that the invasion of Ukraine could happen at all creates fear.

3. For many media researchers, within a few weeks after the start of Russia's large-scale invasion, the thesis "Ukraine is winning the information war" became obvious. In your opinion, from a psychological point of view, what is the reason for the victory of the Ukrainian story?

From a psychological and psychotherapeutic point of view I think that the victory of the Ukrainian story is that the invasion of your country is completely wrong, and you are not going to let yourselves be destroyed. Your country has been invaded in a completely unprovoked way; and you have responded to the invasion with courage, with dignity and with a hope that this unjust invasion cannot possibly be what wins.

This resonates with humanity's deepest longings. We do not want evil to prevail. We do not want injustice to win. We do want good to be stronger than evil. We do want war to end and peace to come.

So the way in which Ukrainians have held the highest principles of humanity – good; justice and peace – is the story that everyone wants to hear.

4. Ukraine is Kyivan Rus. The Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise of Kyiv, known for his diplomacy, was full of desire to strengthen the position of Kyivan Rus in Europe, and he promoted the marriage of his children to royal dynasties of the Old World.

All of his children married members of the ruling families of the continent: his eldest son Ilya married the daughter of King Cnut of Denmark and England; his second son Iziaslav married Polish ruler Kazimierz' daughter Gertrude; Sviatoslav married the granddaughter of German Emperor Heinrich II;

Vsevolod - with the Byzantine princess Maria; fifth son Ihor - with the princess from Germany Kunigunda. Four daughters (Elizabeth, Anastasia, Anna and Agatha) became queens of four countries: Norway, Slovakia, France, and England. In the war, in the information war, they are trying to deprive Ukrainians not of their European future, but of their European past, their primacy, their belonging. What do you think would be the best way to prevent this?

I have learned a great deal about Ukrainian history while I have been preparing for the Symposium on Friday February 24<sup>th</sup> 2023. I have learned about the independence of Ukraine in Kyivan Rus, and about the history of Ukraine before Russian really existed. I have learned how proud Ukrainians are of this history.

Teams of Journalists around the world are covering the story of the war in Ukraine every day. I recommend that you speak to them of Ukraine's history as much as you can. Tell the story of your country in ways that they can understand. Don't make it too complex, but emphasise the essential story of your independence as a country historically, Develop a narrative for Ukraine's proud history that can be understood by those who do not know your history.

5. In one of your interviews, you said that your decision to become a psychologist was influenced by the Hillsborough Disaster. If it's possible and convenient for you, could you reflect now on the consequences of the fact that many, many, many people are learning about tragedies and dramas in Ukraine today, either from the media or directly from Ukrainians. I mean, they are very often exposed to pain and suffering, but also to heroism, to unity, and to an extraordinary confidence in the rightness of the cause, in victory? Can this contribute to something new or to the development of something in society (not directly in Ukraine, but, for example, in France, Italy, the Czech Republic, the UK...)

My own earliest work as a Psychotherapist following the Hillsborough Disaster taught me that you have to engage with trauma when it happens to you, you have to live through it and not ignore it or pretend it isn't happening. This is a difficult thing to do, but when you are able to do this and engage with the trauma, you will find ways to resolve it and as you grow out of it you will become stronger and more resilient.

This is a source of hope for the people of Ukraine. You as a nation are living through a terrible trauma, you are engaging with it courageously, and you will be able to grow out of it both stronger and more resilient as a nation.

6. How does the EAP support the Ukrainian community? What goals did you set for yourself a year ago and what did you achieve? In your opinion, what challenges have been and will be faced by the European Association of Psychotherapists?

One year ago EAP celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, with a Congress conducted in Vienna and with online delegates. My goal as Chair of the Congress and President of EAP was to conduct the two day Congress excellently, and for it to be a seminal moment for Psychotherapists to think about the contribution that we can make to our world. The title of the Congress was “The Hope of Psychotherapy for our Endangered World”, and through outstanding speakers and our work together in groups we discovered the ways in which we can hold hope for our world. Videos from the Congress have been viewed more than 7,000 times!

EAP supports the Ukrainian community through the Ukrainian Umbrella Association for Psychotherapy (UUP) being a national awarding organisation for EAP. Since Autumn 2022 myself and three senior colleagues from the EAP Executive have met regularly with senior colleagues from UUP. We asked our Ukrainian colleagues what support they wanted from us during this terrible time of war, and they answered that they wanted to hold a series of Symposiums about Ethics, and wanted EAP to be partners in this. So we began our work together preparing the first of the Symposiums on Ethics. Our Ukrainian colleagues have told us that they really appreciate this support from EAP, and really appreciate our regular meetings.

**Our hope for the Symposium is that it will honour Ukraine’s past, present and future, and help to shape the culture and ethics of Ukraine for good in the future.**