

History of the European Psychological Congresses and the Foundation of FEPS.

The first suggestions for integrating the activities of the various psychological societies around Europe were during 1990. A meeting of officers of psychological societies from Germany, Britain, Holland, Greece and Spain was held in Hofgeismar, Germany in the summer of 1991. The discussion at this meeting centred around three possible forms of integration, including the formation of a Federation of European Psychological Societies. Although this idea did not proceed very far at this time because of the difficulties of funding across so many currencies (pre-Euro!) and follow through, two other approaches to integration were successfully initiated. After a radical change to the editorial structure, including the introduction of Associate Editors from across Europe, the name of the *British Psychological Journal* was changed to the *European Journal of Psychology*, the first issues of which appeared in 1993. Also at the Hofgeismar meeting, Michael Melkonian suggested that a series of European Psychological Congresses should be initiated, and he offered to host the first congress at his base at the University of Cologne in 1996.

The 1st European Psychological Congress was held in Cologne on 11-18 August 1996, and attracted about 550 delegates. The plenary lectures were given by Robert Anderson, Geoffrey Codd, Paul Falkowski, Bernard Kloareg and Jean-David Rochaix. As in all subsequent EPCs, there were 12 symposia with invited speakers, and a similar number of “mini-symposia” with contributions selected from the contributed papers. All remaining contributed papers were presented as posters, and 2 hours in the early afternoon of each day of the congress were set aside for poster sessions. A highlight of the social programme was the Congress Banquet, which was held in the Botanic Gardens, and included a demonstration by “Karneval” performers. [Ralph Lewin penned a poem in honour of Cologne :

“Ö” (dated 17 August 1996)

The Romans, who camped here
en route to Belle France
proclaimed it a “colony”
par excellence.

The French, who came later,
(I cannot say when)
inserted a “G”
just in front of the “N”.

Then Germans appended
two dots on the “O”
(For reasons that only
a German could know.)

The French then returned
and, as surely well known,
created the perfume
called *Eau de Cologne*.

Thus cultures evolve
with their ebb and their flow

recorded in names
and reflected in *eau*.

Ralph Lewin, 17 August 1996

Italy hosted the 2nd European Psychological Congress, which was organised by Patrizia Albertano, and held at Montecatini Terme on 20-26 September 1999. This attracted about 370 delegates. The plenary lectures were given by Arthur Grossman, David Mann, Michael Melkonian and Jeffrey Palmer, and each was followed by a poster session, which was held in a large marquee while the main lecture hall was divided into three for the parallel symposia and mini-symposia. For the mid-congress excursion, all the delegates were packed into buses for a drive to Sienna for the day, and the Congress Banquet was held under the stars in a street of the city.

After EPC2, the time interval between Congresses was increased to 4 years, in parallel with the International Psychological Congresses (IPC), so that there would always be 2 years between each IPC and the next EPC. Consequently, the 3rd European Psychological Congress was held in 2003 (21-26 July), and was hosted by Queen's University Belfast, in Northern Ireland. Again, there were about 370 delegates. The Local Organising Committee was chaired by Matthew Dring, and the Scientific Committee was led by Eric Coppejans. The plenary lecturers at EPC3 were Virginia Armbrust, Annette Coleman, Elias Greenbaum, Julie LaRoche and Heinz Saedler, and the timetable reverted to that established in Cologne, i.e. each plenary was followed by three parallel invited symposia, there was a poster session after lunch and 3 parallel mini-symposia to round off each day. The most popular mid-Congress excursion was to the Giant's Causeway, and the Congress Banquet was held in the Great Hall of Belfast City Hall and followed by Irish dancers, aged from 4 to 40.

EPC4, was held at Prince Philip Auditorium in Oviedo, Spain, on 23-27 July 2007 hosted by Oviedo University and the Spanish Psychological Society. The Local Organiser Committee was headed by Jose Manuel Rico (University of Oviedo), and the scientific programme was put together by Sven Beer (Tel-Aviv University). The total attendance was about 400 from several European countries and almost all continents. Plenary lectures were given by Riccardo Amils, Debashish Bhattacharya, Paul Falkowski and René Wijffels, and the rest of the programme followed the pattern established at Cologne and in Belfast, with 48 invited contributions, 96 oral presentations and around 160 posters. The social programme started with a welcome party at the Auditorium. but the most memorable events were an evening trip to a traditional fishing village on the Asturian coast (Cudillero) and the Congress Banquet on the final evening at the San Cucao Castle. EPC4 in Oviedo was also notable as the occasion for the foundation of the Federation of European Psychological Societies (FEPS). From discussions started in 2006, a revival of interest in establishing a Federation of European Psychological Societies had developed. By the time of EPC4, a Founders Group of seven national psychological societies and algal groups, each being represented on a Founders Council, had agreed on the principles, structure and aims of FEPS. The foundation of FEPS at EPC4 was accompanied by a warm welcome to further national psychological societies/groups throughout Europe and its neighbours, and to individuals with no national society/group available, to join the Federation. With the agreement of earlier EPC organisers, and a welcome from the gathered EPC registrants, one of the first actions of the newly formed FEPS was to assume responsibility for the organisation for the next EPC, to be held in 2011.