



Psychodrama Association for Europe e.V.
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TO:

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16th of August 2022

Our official response to your Letter from the 20th of July 2022

Dear colleagues and signers of the letter,

We from the Psychodrama Association for Europe e.V. hear your voices and your pain, and not only from the day this terrible war was intensified so brutally on February 24th, 2022. Many of us remember our conference in 2013 in Kyiv and know that this war far precedes this date.

We officially mark that we see the Russian Federation as the aggressor of this war. The Psychodrama Association for Europe e.V. does not have official relations with a Russian organisation or representative and we will not have those until the war ends. Also, we do not have members in our Association, who are citizens of the Russian Federation.

Our statutes, which are published on our website, give clues about the political and ethical values, positions and aims of our Association. They have not changed for more than 30 years. We have never been, and we will never be neutral towards crimes against humanity. We work for peaceful encounter, as was the initial overall goal of the founders of the Psychodrama Association for Europe e.V.

Indeed, we did not publish a declaration. Confronted with our powerlessness as outsiders, living in other countries, we decided to do what we can to fill the psychodramatic truth with life: action is better than talking. We immediately launched the idea to finance support groups with funds of our Association. Now, those support groups, led by our Ukrainian members, partly in exile, are operating and cooperating on an international level, out of 5 countries. In our ongoing open “Members meet Members & Friends” we establish safe spaces to connect and to support all who are in pain.

We see the extreme pain that many of you feel during attempts to enable contact between Ukrainian and Russian people. Also, we can only imagine how unbearable it is for many of you just to listen to the Russian language. It is the language of the enemy, and we understand



how crucial the choice of language is. We also know that this scary hostility is not only directed against Ukraine, but against all people who want to live free and in democracy.

Still, we cannot begin to exclude or stop being in contact with individuals. Not because of only their nationality and not because of their language. It was Moreno himself, who taught us that “a truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of mankind”. This includes, as we know through the work of our honoured member Yaacov Naor, the victim and the perpetrator side, the “enemy within”, the transgenerational aspects, all the pain, anger, rage, sadness, despair...

We share these feelings with you and express our respect for your wish not to be in contact with Russian colleagues. They must endure the tension of the difference between personal responsibility and their collective responsibility as citizens of this state. The latter cannot be taken from them, and it is not your role to witness their feelings of shame and guilt.

So, we are aware that there are times when official contact is not possible, even not necessary, not in the situation of a full-scale war. But because of our aforementioned humanistic values and our deep and broad knowledge about allocation of roles in all human beings, inclusion, not exclusion, stays our aim. We also know about Russian-speaking Ukrainian members who claim their right to use their mother tongue *and* to be seen as trustworthy patriotic Ukrainian persons at the same time. Furthermore, we have a lot of members who live and grew up in other former Soviet Republics (member states or not) and who speak Russian as a common language.

We hope that you can hear our message: Our task of inclusion is not the same as neutrality. Be assured: we will exert our right to exclude every person of whom we become aware of actions, attitudes or statements that contradict our principles and values.

We want and we will continue to support you in every possible way. If we are invited, we can also take part in your encounters and be at your side as close as we can.

We are, and we will be, on the side of peace, humanity, dignity, democracy, legality, and friendliness, which is your side. We invite you cordially to take part in our meetings.

See you soon in a free Ukraine!

Слава Україні!

Jacomien Ilbrink, Gerda Mävers, Johanna Olberding, Ilona Gorog, Anna Bielanska,
Valentyna Skliar, Manfred Jannicke