

Presidents' notes 7/2022

This is my last contribution to the EATA newsletter in the president's role. My term will be soon over. In my personal perception I learned in the first year, then I made mistakes in the second year and started to work in the third year. Nevertheless, I am deeply thankful that I had the chance to contribute to this vital and important community in this role. I am thankful that I could meet so competent, engaged, experienced colleagues from all over Europe and from all over the world.

I made the experience that 3 years are 3 years and that the idea to develop and install reliable, sustainable change in a complex organization is probably an expression of naivety or grandiosity – or both.

We did what we could do – and I am content with it although relevant processes have not been closed, painful conflicts have not been solved, complex topics still wait. I am content and I am happy that with Sylvia Schachner a competent, and experienced next president picks up the baton and that she is supported by a vital, competent and creative Executive Committee.

I want to make some summarizing remarks about professional and political development of EATA, that we intended to stimulate and some personal experiences at the end.

Concerning the professional development of EATA we did some formal work. Some of them:

- we have increased the requirements for President of EATA and installed the option of voting-out this person
- We reviewed contracts, role descriptions and processes.
- We install first steps of intranet

These have been activities that took time and energy and were important even if they were rarely seen. Beside improving structure and processes we had the aim to strengthen the authority of EC. This non-hierarchical authority of EC is in my experience needed to form a common policy of EATA. EATA has strong collegial, cooperative tradition and competencies. The adjustment and common development of such a complex organization that is based on voluntary work and constant fluctuation of its members needs some kind of leadership that is able to bring together, to stimulate commitment and continuity and to stop dysfunctional developments.

We made steps into this direction, and it is not yet clear how much clarity, transparency, functionality on the one side and spontaneity, informality and diversity on the other side is the best balance for this inspiring and potent association. What I experienced was strong agreement and support on the way towards a common policy.

The political development was a matter of my heart. What is EATA and what does it stand for – were and are questions that touch me. It was important for me to make steps in EATA to strengthen the development from an association that is a psychotherapy association to an association with a self-understanding of a psychosocial health approach. This development will touch our offices, our conferences, our theory, our exams and the societies where we are active parts. In EATA we made some small steps.

The proposal of a common mission statement with ITAA is a step in the identity development of EATA to include the experience that we are responsible for our world – as well beyond our office doors. Including sustainability and social justice as relevant aspects of the self-understanding of Transactional Analysts is a step that opens spaces for questions, options and answers – for development. Somehow, we pick up political roots of Eric Berne and Claude Steiner and at the same

time we hold EATA in a development that as well other psychosocial approaches are doing in their way.

The cooperation with ITAA was the second topic that was enriching and essential. I met Elana Leigh and Chitra Ravi as presidents and we formed a relationship of EATA and ITAA as two systems that are different and separated – and because of this can grow together and work together. This experience was helpful in pleasurable phases and in crises. Thank you ITAA for being a partner and I wish EATA an ongoing relationship with an Other One that helps to define the own side.

War on Ukraine has taught us that our work is placed in a reality that sometimes discounts all values that are important for us. I am content that competent, potent and sensitive colleagues helped us to form appropriate answers and to offer support within our developing options. How do we think, feel and act in times of war – this was and is a challenge where we emerge as a psychosocial political association.

Personal

I am thankful to our team – Marianne, Anna, Nicole, Elena, Sylvia, Aleksandra – and those that have already gone – there are too many.

I am thankful to my EATA colleagues – Robin, Kristina BC, Kristina T, Sylvie, Christine, Biljana, Elina B, Leilani – I am proud, thankful and happy that I had the chance and that I survived this challenging chairing.

I am thankful to my colleagues from EATA – Elana Leigh, Chitra Ravi, Sue Eusden, Jacqueline von Gent, Thorsten Geck and many other.

Taking the lead – taking responsibility was a strange experience for me and I am content to perceive it like this. Getting power means responsibility and work. I listened to many persons - persons, colleagues from all over the world, especially from Europe. I was often overwhelmed by the richness of their experiences, by the power of their friendliness, by the sensitivity of their requests – and sometimes I was touched by the need that they showed. I realized that my role sometimes had a weight that had to be carried – then my ideas were not just an interesting idea but a statement of a role. This was sometimes difficult. I was happy to be framed, limited and supported by a warm and potent EC-team.

I was allowed and asked to present and install my ideas of EATA in this active role – and this was something that I did not understand before although Sabine Blumenstein had exactly this named when I asked her what it could mean to be a president of EATA.

I am content with my contribution to EATA. Hopefully I will find one or two places where I can continue to work for EATA.

EATA is on a way of good and strong development – as a professional organization, as a political body and as a psychosocial health approach. I look forward to the future of EATA.

Peter Rudolph

President EATA

26.06.2022