

The slow train on Platform 3...

The Psychotherapist, Spring 2009, p. 3 – accessible [here](#).

Concerned about the welfare of their staff carrying sacks full of letters up to the UKCP office, Royal Mail has begged me to update Registrants on the European Association of Psychotherapy's (EAP) campaign to establish a 'Common Platform' (CP) for psychotherapy. This would allow psychotherapists to work across Europe, even in countries with restrictive national laws, by 'compensating' for 'deficiencies' in their training.

Representatives of the European Commission and of the EAP met in January (2009), the third of their regular meetings to progress this proposal. The state of play is quite interesting: the Commissioners are supportive of EAP taking this forward – but want it done properly. It turns out that other professions (notably engineers and psychologists), which had been pursuing the CP route have given up in the face of specific obstacles and practical problems.

Psychotherapists are at present the only profession pursuing this route – so we are likely to be the first to submit a formal proposal and have it tested. The Commissioners want to see how this procedure works, so they are encouraging the EAP to continue.

However, they (and we) have a vested interest in getting it right, and they won't accept the application until they believe it is ready to come to fruition. There are two areas which need further support.

First, the CP depends on having detailed 'reference points' – the countries with the least, and most, demanding training requirements. These appear to be Finland and Austria, respectively. The difference between the level and the content of training between the two indicates the 'compensations' which practitioners would have to show they meet. The EAP has work to do here.

Secondly, we need to show more evidence of problems of 'migration' – where psychotherapists have been prevented from working in other countries in the EU. To address this, the EAP is commissioning more detailed research – which will involve the national bodies such as UKCP.

The Commission is very keen to help us on the proposal – but will not act until the proposal is considered ready. Once we file a proposal, because this is the first application, the Commission reckons it would take two years to complete the process. In the meantime, the Commission has developed a new procedure called SOLVIT, which, together with court proceedings, could help individual psychotherapists experience problems in working across Europe.

UKCP is committed to psychotherapy being opened up across Europe to therapists from primary professions other than psychology and psychiatry. So, watch this space...

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