



# AD HOC WORKING GROUP DIGITALISATION

# Ad Hoc Working Group Digitalisation

## Terms of Reference

### 1. EFPA's activity agenda

**1.1** The Activity Agenda of the Board of Directors, which was approved by the 2023 General Assembly, is intended to focus the activities of EFPA for the 2023-2025 mandate.

**1.2** The framework for EFPA's activity is based on EFPA's Purpose as set out in the Statutes: " The non-profit purpose of international utility of the Federation shall be, within Europe and worldwide, to:

(a) Develop psychology:

- i. Develop psychology education, science, and professional practice;
- ii. Promote the dissemination of psychological knowledge, to develop a clear image of psychology and make it accessible, useful and respected;

(b) Contribute to society;

- i. Contribute psychological theory and practice to quality of life including health and wellbeing of people living in Europe and to a democratic and prosperous society;
- ii. Represent psychology at the European level, and contribute psychological science to European policy development;

(c) Serve Psychologists;

- i. Support the development of its Full Members and their activities at the national level; and
- ii. Enhance the standing of the profession and its legal status at the European level, building a European professional identity based on common values and goals, equality, diversity, inclusion, multi and interculturalism, mutual respect and collaboration, mobility, and service to society."

### 2. Digitalisation

**2.1** The term *digitalisation* describes the increasing use of technology to facilitate a growing number of professional and social functions. These include, among many other examples: communication technologies such as the internet, social media and online video calls; experiential technologies like virtual reality and mixed reality; and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

**2.2** The importance of adequately considering the effects of digitalisation has been flagged by numerous institutions, including in the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>1</sup> and by the World Health Organisation<sup>2</sup>. The European Commission's Digital Decade programme<sup>3</sup> highlights the importance of: a digitally skilled population and professionals; secure and sustainable digital infrastructures; digital transformation of businesses; and digitalisation of public services. The European Union's AI Act<sup>4</sup> focuses on how best to categorise and respond to various types of AI technology. Digitalisation also features prominently in the Commission's Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health policy<sup>5</sup>.

**2.3** In the context of psychology the consideration of digitalisation, as a cross-cutting issue, intersects across EFPA's strategic priorities of: developing psychology; contributing to society; and serving psychologists. The term digitalisation includes topics related to e-health—which is a focus on digitalisation in the context of health—but its scope is considerably broader, including all aspects of direct and indirect engagement with technology. Importantly, developments in this area tend to be impactful and fast moving, necessitating a response that is well informed as well as agile. EFPA has a strong history of work in this area, with many Full Members giving the topic significant attention and a number of Working Groups making it a primary focus of their work plans. EFPA included the topic

of Digitalisation under Point 7 '*Equality of Access*' in EFPA's seven priorities around mental health in recent advocacy work as part of the European Commission's Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health call<sup>5</sup>.

**2.4** At the EFPA General Assembly 2023 updates were provided and the importance of this area was highlighted, with a commitment given to review the latest developments and to consider how best to structure EFPA's engagement with the topic. Digitalisation updates have since been provided at Council meetings, and the creation of the Ad Hoc Working Group Digitalisation has now been approved by the Board of the Directors in order to support EFPA's response.

### **3. Objectives and deliverables**

**3.1** The Ad Hoc Working Group Digitalisation's main objectives, as directed and approved by the Board of Directors, are:

- 3.1.1** An expert reference group in the area of digitalisation;
- 3.1.2** A sounding board for related consultations EFPA engages in;
- 3.1.3** Helping to inform EFPA's advocacy work around digitalisation;
- 3.1.4** Focusing on the digital strategies of relevant institutions and stakeholders;
- 3.1.5** Identifying networks and collating key resources and an evidence-base to support EFPA's work in this area;
- 3.1.6** Supporting the diverse needs of EFPA's Full Members;
- 3.1.7** Supporting as needed the work of EFPA's Working Groups in accordance with agreed work plans;
- 3.1.8** Contributing to drafting a list of priorities around digitalisation as it relates to EFPA's strategic priorities of developing psychology, contributing to society and serving psychologists.

**3.2** The Ad Hoc Working Group Digitalisation's main deliverables will consist of brief evidence based reports providing updates around digitalisation with associated recommendations. The precise nature of deliverables is expected to be determined by the Ad Hoc Working Group Digitalisation in discussion with EFPA's Board of Directors.

### **4. Deadlines**

**4.1** The Ad Hoc Working Group Digitalisation's remit will expire in July 2025 at the end of the current EFPA mandate. In terms of administrative requirements, the final deliverable will be expected around April 2025.

**4.2** It is anticipated that the group will set, in conjunction with the Board of Directors, a timetable for interim deliverables targeted on related societal and policy developments, relevant European institutional events, the European Congresses of Psychology, Full Member events, and global psychology events where EFPA is participating.

### **5. Membership**

**5.1** The Board of Directors will form a small group (likely 6-8 persons) based on signalled interest from Full Members, and relevant expertise and experience.

### **6. Meetings**

**6.1** The Ad Hoc Working Group Digitalisation will aim to meet virtually. Face to face meetings will be considered mainly if they can be organised in settings where the group members already will be gathered. Costs of the meeting arrangements such as hospitality will be borne by EFPA. Group member travel, subsistence and accommodation should be borne by the nominating Full Member

and the group member should seek approval in advance and follow the policies and procedures of their nominating Full Member.

## **7. Planning, Reporting and communication of the work**

**7.1** The Ad Hoc Working Group Digitalisation will prepare a brief plan of expected progress with clear deliverables and indicative timescales.

**7.2** The Ad Hoc Working Group Digitalisation will prepare a report in EFPA's format on its activities to the Board of Directors as a contribution to EFPA's General Assembly Activity Report. The group will also prepare short communication pieces in liaison with EFPA's Board of Directors as needed.

## **8. EFPA Board of Directors Liaison and main Head Office contact**

**8.1** The EFPA Board of Directors Liaison for the Working Group is John Francis Leader.

**8.2** The main Head Office contact is Julie van den Borre.

EFPA Board of Directors  
01 May 2024

## **References**

1. United Nations, 2015, N Resolution 70/1, [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_70\\_1\\_E.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf)
2. World Health Organisation, 2021, Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240020924>
3. European Commission, 2021, Europe's Digital Decade, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/europes-digital-decade>
4. European Parliament, 2024, Artificial Intelligence Act, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0138\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0138_EN.pdf)
5. European Commission, 2023, A Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health policy, [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/european-health-union/comprehensive-approach-mental-health\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/european-health-union/comprehensive-approach-mental-health_en)