

European Association for Body Psychotherapy

18<sup>th</sup> International Congress

Sofia, Bulgaria ■ September 2023

## Identity in Transformative Times

*The Wisdom of Here and Now Goes Global*

W

e can hardly ever exhaust the topic of what the last three years have been like for people everywhere. The footprint of this pandemic stretches into various aspects of our lives and will be studied for years before the tides of time wash it away. However, the sense of a new normal has begun to settle in. Our pace is accelerating as we leave this crisis behind, and much like every other major calamity in human history, we carry on, led by the guiding light of the lessons learned.

Over the past few years, forced into confinement, there wasn't much else to do but self-reflect. When the stimulating external world was finally off limits, there was only one way to go... *in*. A crisis for some, an opportunity for others, a challenge for all, this time of uncertainty was a long overdue pause – a much-needed slowing down for a world that had mastered moving “in a hurry” without a clear sense of self and purpose. After nearly three blissful years of having no option other than to live *here and now*, we can finally take a deep breath and look up. The time has come to integrate this experience and share its wisdom with a world that has never had a greater need to *grow*.

An essential part of defining our ever-changing identity is asking ourselves, “*Who am I today? What am I made of? What am I part of?*”

As beings whose most sacred need is to *belong*, and in seeking answers to these questions, there is nothing of higher significance than to connect and interact with others. And to do so genuinely, in the present, in person...

For both body psychotherapy professionals and enthusiasts, 2023 will be marked not only by the dusk of the COVID-19 pandemic but also by the first in-person EABP congress since Berlin in 2018. Titled *Identity in Transformative Times – Construction, Deconstruction, Reconstruction*, the congress will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria, in early September 2023. The second oldest European capital will host more than 700 attendees at the historic *Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski*.

In over five days of workshops, keynote speeches, and professional exchange, we will dive into the subject of identity and its transformation in times of change. We will be asking whether the impact is positive or negative and what our role as psychotherapists is in all of this. In the panel of keynote speakers, the body psychotherapy family of professionals will be represented by Merete Brantjberg, Tom Warnacke, Maurizio Stuppigia, and Rubens Kignel. Beyond that, the rapidly developing science and ever-growing need for evidence-based solutions calls for broadening our horizons and professional

identity. Considering this, the Congress Preparation Committee (CPC) invited four keynote speakers from scientific areas close to ours whose work and research can bridge the body psychotherapy field and the world of empirical evidence and proven science. The domains of epigenetics, social anthropology, futurology, and aquaphotomics will be represented by four outstanding professionals in their respective fields. As university lecturers and researchers, their work has left its mark all the way from Bulgaria to Japan. Some are already well-known to the *International Body Psychotherapy Journal* (IBPJ) readers. They are Associate Professor Milena Georgieva, Ph.D., a member of the Bulgarian Academy of Science, a molecular biologist specializing in epigenetics who sees body psychotherapy as a transformative epigenetic phenomenon; Haralan Alexandrov, Ph.D., a consultant and researcher in the field of psycho-social studies and social anthropology, who focuses on the links and relationship between the outer (social, political, historical, and economical) and inner changes in our lives; Dr. Mariana Todorova, a futurologist and author of works published in Bulgaria and the USA, whose work focuses on detailed, in-depth analysis of what awaits humankind in the future; Dr. Roumina Tsenkova, head of the first of its kind Aquaphotomics Research Department at the Graduate School of Agricultural Science at Kobe University, Japan, where she studies the role of water's molecular system in biological and aqueous systems, and how it relates to the changes in our psycho-physiological health.

If we are to continue to effectively seek a state of unity in our physical and mental health, as both individuals and professionals, these times demand the widening of our mindset by integrating various points of view and scientific knowledge.

Each day, following the keynote presentations, panels will highlight the congress topics. Through short presentations by the panelists and open Q&A discussions, they will focus on the following:

- *Body and Identity* – panel chair Maurizio Stuppiggia;
- *Exploiting the relationship between psychotherapy and epigenetics* – panel chair Antigone Oreopoulou;
- *Identity and cultural aspects* – panel chair Jill Van Der Aa;
- *Identity in unity and diversity; the war inside and outside the body* – panel chair Sladjana Djordjevic;
- *Identity and the development of body psychotherapy conceptual discussion* – panel chair Frank Röhrlich;
- *The future is now; body psychotherapy in transformation* – panel chair Kathrin Stauffer.



The official opening of the congress will be preceded by a day of pre-congress workshops on Wednesday, September 6. On Thursday, September 7, delegates will gather for the General Assembly at the Aula of Sofia University. The official opening will begin with a performance that can best be described as the collective magic of traditional Bulgarian drummers, bagpipers, and the folklore choir “Cosmic Voices.” Following a joint speech by the president of EABP, Carmen Joan Ablack, and Madlen Algefari, Congress Chair, there will be a welcome speech by the Dean of Psychology Faculty at Sofia University. Our first two keynote speakers, Merete Brantbjerg and Tom Warnacke will respectively offer talks on “*What am I when parts of me are missing?*” and “*Cultural self(s) and their psycho-physiological presentations in the consulting room.*” The day will conclude with a meet & greet cocktail hour at the university’s botanical garden.

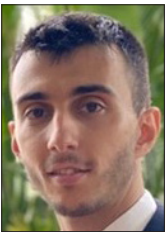
Each morning, professionals and alumni of the Bulgarian Institute for Neo-Reichian Analytical Body Psychotherapy will lead 30-minute modules of grounding practices such as *Bioenergetic gymnastics*, *Bulgarian folk dance*, and *dance therapy*. Throughout the congress, attendees will have access to more than 65 workshops.

On the last day of the congress, our closing gala banquet will be held at *Vodenitsata*, one of the most remarkable venues for traditional Bulgarian cuisine located at the foot of Vitosha Mountain. Our guests will have the unique opportunity to taste some of the region's finest dishes and witness and experience the magic and mysticism of the Bulgarian folklore tradition of *Nestinari* – dance artists performing on fire.

We invite everyone to benefit from the early bird registration rates and to submit their content for workshops. More information about the content, schedule, venue and registration can be found on the official congress website at [www.congress.eabp.org](http://www.congress.eabp.org). All workshop applications must be submitted through the congress website by February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Priority will be given to applications for experiential and psychotherapeutic work by EABP members.

As always, the congress will hold a Scientific Research Symposium during which the training institutes accredited by the EABP Forum of Training Institutes will present their scientific research, confirming the effects and efficacy of body psychotherapy and somatic psychology.

On behalf of the CPC and EABP, I welcome you to the 18<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the European Association for Body Psychotherapy. Bulgaria awaits you!



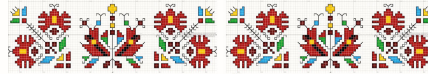
**Alex Vachev** is a translator, certified educator, visual and performing artist, choreographer, and stage director. While studying at the Bulgarian Institute for Neo-Reichian Analytical Body Psychotherapy, he has developed workshops and practices in recent years involving visual arts and dance as therapeutic tools. Currently, he is a senior member of the CPC for the 18<sup>th</sup> International EABP Congress with Madlen Algafari, Meglena Beneva, and Dr. Vladimir Pozharashki. He has a vast experience in multicultural environments across Europe, North America, and Asia.



18th International Congress of European Association for Body Psychotherapy

## Identity in Transformative Times

Construction, Deconstruction, Reconstruction



7-10 September 2023  
Sofia, Bulgaria



# 18<sup>th</sup> International Congress of EABP, Sofia 2023

## Identity in Transformative Times

### Construction, Deconstruction, Reconstruction

The most constant thing is change. From one second to the next, we are different. Cells in our body are always dying while new ones are being born. Our wise physical self constantly transforms and knows what to do to adapt. But what about the Soul? Our soul is sometimes "late" and other times too fast. And when our soul and body "arrive" at different times, the symptoms follow.

We live our lives at an increasingly faster pace. The answer to the crucial existential question we ask ourselves, "Who am I?" changes around the clock. The avalanche of changes a 18<sup>th</sup> International Congress of EABP, Sofia 2023 round us is, at times, overwhelming and also, can present new challenges. New technologies, pandemics, virtual reality, globalization, multiculturalism, wars, crisis, innovation, new connections, spiritual revolution...

Are we moving to more health and truth or towards illness and neurosis? Where are we headed? What happens to our identity? How do we, in the present day, experience its construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction? Who were we, and whom are we going to be? And how can we best help the people we work with so we can continue not only to exist but also be?

**MEET THE SPEAKERS, JOIN THE WORKSHOPS, DELIVER YOUR OWN WORKSHOP, VISIT SOFIA, JOIN EABP LIFE!**



### Key speakers

**Merete Holm Brantbjerg**

**Tom Warnecke**

**Maurizio Stupiggia**

**Milena Georgieva**

**Rubens Kignel**

**Haralan Alexandrov**

**Roumiana Tsenkova**

**Madlen Algafari**

**Mariana Todorova**



### Venue



**LEARN MORE & REGISTER @**

<https://congress.eabp.org/2023/site/>