

Genoa, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023

Dear IPSO colleagues,

with this letter I hereby present myself together with my bid for VP elect for Europe in the upcoming IPSO elections.

I am a psychiatrist, psychotherapist and candidate at the Institute of the Italian Psychoanalytic Society (SPI). I have a PhD in Clinical and Experimental Neurosciences and my studies focused on suicidology with a special interest for the psychoanalytical understandings of suicidal behaviour in psychosis. I believe in the centrality of the relational nature of the mind and, hence, the importance of developing a language with the other person that enables communication, thereby, lessening the isolation and loneliness that is often present when there is deep pain. In my opinion, the possibility of developing a common language, i.e. a way to communicate on no matter which level, is of the utmost importance for my nascent psychoanalytical identity as well as being key to enriching encounters and respectful dialogues between different psychic dimensions and subjectivities. I feel this takes place during my work with patients and also in my exchanges with colleagues which have been most enlightening and stimulating both on a scientific and personal level.

I worked in international groups on projects such as the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP), the European Psychiatric Association (EPA), the Aeschi Group and have also had nine years' experience of teamwork in research groups both as a group member and in the coordinating team. Since my high school days, I have particularly enjoyed being part of teams translating from German and English into Italian. The latest was in 2022, when I worked in a group with other Italian IPA candidates to translate the book *Dear Candidate*. Last year, facing the human emergency in Ukraine, two fellow candidate friends and I put together and coordinated a group of Italian candidates for the humanitarian help and support of Ukrainian colleagues including non-IPAs. The group, called *Italian candidates & friends*, was soon opened to non-mental health professionals and reached more than fifty members. There were also two native Russian speakers who helped the Ukrainian colleagues in Italy with job interviews to become therapists that members of the group had found for them. The experience of coordinating this group was extremely rewarding on a personal level and resulted in the development of warm friendships.

Of course, delicate situations can develop during teamwork and I tend to handle them through attentive listening in order to understand the various positions and form my own ideas on the matter. Then, I openly and respectfully relate with the parties to promote an agreement or, at least, restore an atmosphere in which teamwork can continue.

As being able to communicate and exchange is of paramount importance for me, I speak English,

German, French as well as Italian, of course. Unfortunately, I have only elementary Japanese although it is still very much in my mind to continue studying it.

Over the last two years I had the privilege of being an IPSO rep: through this inspiring experience I came into contact with numerous colleagues, many of whom are now friends, and from whom I have learnt a lot both on cross-cultural and scientific levels. I'm also in a CRSG which is especially valuable to me both as a professional and a person. Being part of a large, creative network of peers with incredibly rich backgrounds and becoming involved in their experience of training, working life, way of reading and understanding psychoanalytic literature as presented in their Institutes as well as offering my own contribution is highly fulfilling. I'm proud to be a member of the IPSO reviewing team. I have also worked in the formation of teams for various Meet the Analyst events which are always great occasions for getting in touch with experienced analysts on a personal level and understanding more deeply their conceptualizations and style that are often intertwined with their personal story. I think of these events as encounters between generations fostering both continuity and development.

My reasons for making the present bid to become VP elect are due to the richness of my experience in IPSO, that I wish to all colleagues, and my firm belief in the potential, capacity and relevance of international exchanges in the development of our nascent analytic identity. Given the opportunity, I hope to help create further initiatives for connection and growth, and generate stimulating experiences for all of us worldwide. There is so much that we can do together, and, to this end, I'd like to organise: (1) short residential online courses with international experts from different psychoanalytic schools designed for reading pertinent literature leading to discussions, including the different ways in which the same author may be read worldwide. Reflections could then be shared in IPSO panels or even a book; (2) focus groups to reflect analytically on current topics, e.g. gender, climate change, present and past politics, crosscultural traditions and literature, the SARS-COVID19 pandemic, and training experience in different Institutes. Again, reflections could then be shared in IPSO panels; (3) group supervision with international experts in safe environments of course; (4) support, promote and work with you on initiatives that you may wish to organise or develop. We have such a great potential as IPSO community!

Hoping that you find my points suitable and relevant to serve you in the position I'm applying for,

I thank you for your time and attention,

Yours sincerely,

Paola Solano, M.D., PhD.