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Position: Board of Ethics, EFPA

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Letter of interest

By the present letter I wish to express my interest to candidate for a position in the Board of Ethics, EFPA. In the following I will present my activity in the field of ethics that justifies and gives credibility to this application.

The areas of specialization after my academic studies in Romania (Bachelor in Science in Philosophy, Psychology, Master of science in Psychology, and PhD in Medicine) are: clinical psychology, research ethics, clinical ethics, public health. After completion of my PhD thesis in medical Psychology (May 2011), I was involved in a research ethics project, granted by Botnar Foundation within Medical Faculty of the University Basel, Switzerland, my activity here being supervised by Prof. Dr. Stella Reiter-Theil. On March 1, 2011, I started my project as Assistant/Postdoc researcher in the department of Clinical Ethics, University Basel, Switzerland.

The starting point of my work has been the discussion and reflection of a large and prominent FP7 research project (SEYLE) dedicated to help empowering and saving young lives in Europe. This project was carried out with children and adolescents with the help of schools and teachers in order to study the effectiveness of preventive interventions for risk-taking behavior and suicidal attempts. Due to the vulnerable nature of the involved minors, the project required ethical reflection; Prof. S. Reiter-Theil has been serving as ethical advisor to the project. The BOTNAR-project allowed to follow-up with open – ethical – questions applying a casuistic approach of analysis. A first step was to identify components of “normative research ethics” in different countries of Europe as expressed in (ethics) codes, guidelines, legal instruments etc., used for orientation in research with minors (and in psychiatry / psychology). The codes and guidelines were searched worldwide, but we placed special emphasis on EU central and Eastern European countries. The next was the analysis of the results of the above, especially developing categories of the themes that were (descriptively) addressed in existing guidance documents for research with minors (and other vulnerable populations) in medicine, psychiatry and psychology, and identifying any themes that should (normatively) be covered, but have been not.

One result of this enterprise was an article published in the Romanian Journal of Bioethics, March 2013 (see enclosed). A second article on confidentiality in studies with children and adolescents touching sensitive topics was published in “European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry” Journal, in 2014 (see enclosed).

On the background of the results, I engaged myself in the preparation and performance of a study based on a Delphi approach with interdisciplinary experts (psychiatrists, psychologists, health professionals, ethicists). The results of this work were documented in two conference presentations: the 27th European Conference on Philosophy of Medicine and Health Care (ESPMH), held in Basel, August 2013, the 5th (Swiss) Congress of the Psy-Associations, Montreux, September 2013, Poster session. A manuscript describing the Delphi process (design, method and results) has been drafted and was published in *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* in 2016 (see enclosed). At recommendation and together with Prof. Stella Reiter-Theil I was invited to write the chapter “Competence” in *Encyclopedia of Global Bioethics* coordinated by Prof. Henk Ten Have, published in 2015.

Apart of my research ethics project I had a fruitful collaboration with the Research Department of the Child and Adolescent of Psychiatric Hospitals Basel – contribution to the Kick-Off Meeting of the EU FP7 FemNat-CD Neurobiology and Treatment of Adolescent Female Conduct Disorder: The Central Role of Emotion Processing (Grant Agreement no. 602407, Collaborative Project/ Small or Medium Scale) as representative of the ethical advisor Prof. Dr. Stella Reiter-Theil (2013). During 2014-2017 I was appointed ethical advisor to a Marie-Curie Fellowship Project - "Antibody-responses to *Helicobacter pylori* and tumor proteins as biomarkers for early gastric cancer" (number 627794; Acronym HELICOMARK) and I wrote two ethics reports for the European Commission (see enclosed one report).

As recognition of my activity in the field of research ethics I was appointed Section Editor to the *Romanian Journal of Bioethics* during 2014-2015. In my position I reviewed more than 20 manuscripts in the field of ethics. I am founding member of the “Bioethics and Health Policy and Research Network”, project developed by the colleagues from University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Grigore T. Popa”, Iași, and starting 2016 I was appointed Section Editor for *International Journal of Bioethics & Health Policy*.

In May 2016, I was granted the opportunity to be lecturer and one of the coordinator of the course “Ethics of the Pediatric Research” to the University of Padova, Italy. My position as a coordinator of the course “Ethics of Pediatric Research” has been made possible due to a Visiting Scholarship within Master of Bioethics Erasmus Mundus (see the document enclosed).

Regarding the teaching activity, I was the responsible for the Bioethics section course within the specialization of Physical Therapy and Balneology, at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Iuliu Hatieganu” Cluj-Napoca in 2018.

Motivation

In view of the progress that I was able to make regarding research ethics and based on my international visibility in this field I will continue to deepen my knowledge and to prepare for a successful transfer of knowledge in the field of Psychology. On the background of my academic preparation and experience in the field of ethics I can ensure a high standard of an informed

involvement in the development of guidelines in the field of supervision in psychology and code of ethics that represent the main objectives of the EFPA agenda.

I strongly believe that the opportunity of continuing working within the scientific environment as a representative of the Romanian College of Psychologists in Board of Ethics will serve in producing significant results of mutual interest.

Yours Sincerely,
Elisabeta Ioana Hirișcău



Enclosures

1. **Article 1.** Hirișcău I, Stingelin-Giles N, Reiter-Theil S. Ethical issues in research with minors. Orientation by codes and many open questions. *Romanian Journal of Bioethics*. 2013;3(11): 21-31 (IF=1).
2. **Article 2.** Hirișcău I, Stingelin-Giles N, Stadler C, Schmeck K, Reiter-Theil S. A Right to Confidentiality or a Duty to Disclose? Ethical Guidance for Conducting Prevention Research with Minors. *Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2014; 23(6): 409-16 (IF=3,699)
3. **Article 3.** Ioana Hirișcău, Nicola Stingelin-Giles, Danuta Wasserman, Stella Reiter-Theil. Identifying the Ethical Issues in Mental Health Research with Minor Adolescents. Results of a Delphi Study. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*. 2016; 13, 489; doi:10.3390/ijerph13050489 (IF = 2, 035)
4. **Ethics Report.** Helicomark project
5. **Letter Padova**