



Agir à vos côtés
pour l'ostéopathie

Philippe Sterlingot
Président

philippe.sterlingot@osteopathe-syndicat.fr

Tel : +33660513241

Marika Jevbratt

Chair of European Federation and
Forum for Osteopathy
Institute of Osteopathy
3 Park Terrace
Manor Road
Luton LU1 3HN

Paris, 3rd of September, 2019

Dear Chair,

I would like to come back to your email referring to my last letter, dated the 5th of October, 2018, where I would like to make some clarifications.

As you would remember, SFDO has always been a very strong supporter of European osteopathic profession development since the FORE was set up in 2005. As a French representative, I have been involved in numerous European projects, such as EFSOP, EFCOP, EFSOET and the *European Osteopathic Scope of Practice (SOPE)*. More recently, as the head of the French mirror committee and delegation, I played a pivotal role in the creation of the CEN standard and then also held an important role in the EFO-FORE merging process. My European commitment, despite of the fact that the SFDO was no longer a member of any European body, led me to allocate a lot of time to persuade AFNOR not to vote in favour of the Spanish Government request.

This commitment is founded on the fact that, despite the national health departments being managed at a national level, some political actions should be made at a EU level and, as such, cooperation between osteopathic professional bodies is essential. It is also based on a strong conviction that the success of the osteopathic professional will be more likely to come from the quality of education, research and practice, rather than on any branding strategies. This is one of the reasons why SFDO preferred, in 2005, to join

Le Syndicat Français Des Ostéopathes Exclusifs



Agir à vos côtés
pour l'ostéopathie

FORE rather than EFO. This is also one of the reasons why, during merger process, I worked a lot with Gert Jan Goede to develop structure and to integrate content, purpose and a strategic plan for the new association.

Considering that it was important that the new board, resulting from the merger process, should be equally balanced between the two merging entities, we, as FORE representatives encouraged FORE members, during Estonian AGM, to vote in EFO board members who ran for EFO board positions. Unfortunately, we each know that the converse was not true, and the EFO board which was elected in Athens was unequally balanced. Therefore, the FORE wasn't anymore represented enough, resulting with Gert Jan Goede stepping down at the end of 2018. Anybody's perception of this process would see it was more akin to a take over, rather than a merger.

As a result, the SFDO considered that the EFO had not honoured its commitments, consequently, logically, freeing the SFDO from past agreements it had with the EFO/EFO. This has led to a political disagreement between the EFO and SFDO, and as you may know, political disagreements can't be solved by injunctions, in particular financial ones.

In addition, you may remember that during our July 2016 London meeting, we, as FORE representatives, expressed opposition to the merged organization having its headquarters in United Kingdom. The current chair of EFO answered to this concern that this decision was a short-term one and that it would be reconsidered. However, it is currently still based in the UK, with the Institute of Osteopathy CEO also the CEO of the EFO. The whole situation raising a lot of concerns.

I have already expressed how much I appreciate Maurice Cheng's human qualities and skills, so please understand that this is not a personal attack. We are also aware of all the good work achieved by our British colleagues in their country, and we are all conscious of the quality of the osteopathic regulation in UK. But being respectful to British osteopathy doesn't mean that we are obliged to agree with it in its entirety.

Le Syndicat Français Des Ostéopathes Exclusifs



Agir à vos côtés
pour l'ostéopathie

The influence of the CEO on an organization's decision making processes is very significant, especially while board members are scattered all over Europe.

Despite of all of Maurice's efforts, it is probably highly difficult for him not to be impregnated with UK osteopathic ways of thinking osteopathy. Yet, European osteopathy is slightly different from UK osteopathy:

While UK osteopathy is mainly musculo-skeletal based, osteopathy on the continent addresses more frequently all the tissues, or components, of the body.

While UK osteopathy is focused on musculo-skeletal conditions - for the NHS, « Osteopathy is a way of detecting, treating and preventing health problems by moving, stretching and massaging a person's muscles and joints. » - osteopaths from many European countries aim to treat many other health conditions.

While UK osteopathy was first to be officially recognised, no more than 2 % of British citizens use an osteopath each year, 90 % have never attended an Osteopathic appointment.

While British osteopathic colleges provide a 4-years curriculum, CEN standard requires 4,800 hours training or a Master Degree, which is not achievable in 4 years.

All these issues might put at some time the iO & EFO's CEO in an uncomfortable position.

For all these reasons, notwithstanding that our UK colleagues have a lot to share with us, a European osteopathic body should opt for neutrality, our strong suggestion being to establish itself in a continental country - for example, Brussels would be ideal, for many reasons - and, appoint a neutral CEO, coming from outside the osteopathic world, ensuring no conflicts of interest.

In addition, while writing this letter, the last British elections for European Parliament strengthen the 'hard brexit' scenario, confirmed by the personality named as the new

Le Syndicat Français Des Ostéopathes Exclusifs



Agir à vos côtés
pour l'ostéopathie

Prime Minister and his recent statements and actions. Should this scenario happen, the credibility of a European federation might be weakened if it was set up in the UK.

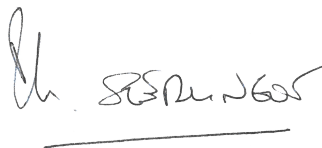
Lastly, the French Government launched recently a new survey to decide which professional bodies will be officially recognised as the representative of the French osteopathic profession. The threshold for professional representativity is usually around 5% of the total number of practitioners currently registered. There were 20,212 osteopaths registered at the end of 2018, of which the SFDO had 1,300 members, and therefore should be renewed as an official representative of the profession for the third time since 2013. This should not be the case for organisations below 1,000 members.

Should this situation being unchanged in the future, France may no longer be officially represented in the EFFE, as any French association under the threshold limit is likely not to be recognised by the French authorities.

As there are as many osteopaths in France as there are in the rest of Europe, and while 30 % of French citizens use an osteopath each year, it would be not be in the best interest of the osteopathic profession if France is not represented at a European level in the EFFE, we understand this.

Should you reconsider these issues, we would be very happy to start discussions with you. Should you not feel these issues warrant attention, I am afraid that EFFE-SFDO divide will be long lasting.

Yours



Le Syndicat Français Des Ostéopathes Exclusifs
