

## The South-East European Regional Conference of Psychology Sofia, Bulgaria, October-November 2009



The continuing series of Regional Conferences of Psychology are jointly sponsored ventures of IUPsyS, IAAP (the International Association of Applied Psychology) and IACCP (International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology). The conferences, held every two years, have been running since 1995. The most recent, the eighth, was SEERCP 2009,

held in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 30<sup>th</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November. The series as a whole aims to review the state of psychology in particular regions, to foster its development and to disseminate psychological understanding, knowledge and effective practice within the region.

The objective of SEERCP 2009 was to demonstrate the achievements and enhance the capacity-building collaboration of psychologists in the region and in the world. The conference was intended to allow psychologists in the region to share and increase their professional knowledge of what is going on in their countries, and to learn about the paradigms, schools, needs and achievements of psychologists across the region and other parts of the world.

The conference was hosted by the Bulgarian Psychological Association (BPS) whose President, Dr Plamen Dimitrov, was the Chair of the Organising Committee. Professor Sava Djonev, Vice President of

the BPS, chaired the Scientific Programme Committee. Over 350 delegates attended, of whom about half were from the SEE Region or nearby countries. The remainder were from Western Europe and from countries further afield, including Australia, Canada, Singapore, South Africa and the USA.

The Opening Ceremony was held in the Aula, the grand hall of the University of Sofia approached through a spectacular marble foyer and staircase. Speakers at the Ceremony (prefaced by Bulgarian folk singing) included the Deputy Minister of Education, the Chairs of the Conference Organising and Scientific Committees, the President of IAAP (Mike Knowles) and the President of IUPsyS. The scientific work of the conference followed



Professor Plamen Dimitrov  
at the Opening Ceremony  
of the SEERCP

immediately on from this welcoming ceremony. The scientific programme included keynote presentations, symposia, individual papers and poster sessions. These were supported and complemented by Round Tables, Workshops and a range of ad hoc meetings and exhibitions.

The themes were chosen by the Committees to address achievements and challenges of Psychology in the SEE region, and included:

- Health Psychology in a changing world
- School and Developmental Psychology
- Clinical and Counselling Psychology
- Applied Social Psychology in action
- Psychology in the economy, public policy and government
- Organisational Psychology
- Disasters and Crisis Psychology
- Psychological Assessment
- Research in juvenile justice services
- Applied Psychology as a profession

Outside the work of the conference sessions, the organisers had laid on a magnificent social programme, including an Opening Cocktail in the National Archaeological Museum with its collection of unique ancient Bulgarian artefacts, a sightseeing tour of Sofia, a memorable folklore dinner complete with Bulgarian folk dancing and an excursion to the historic





Bulgarian folk dancing and an excursion to the historic town of Plovdiv.

At the closing ceremony, speakers congratulated the organising team on the comprehensive success of the undertaking. The great success of the conference reflects the enormous dedication and sheer hard work of the organisers, as well as that of the many collaborating organisations across the region. The conference has made a significant contribution to building networks regionally and more widely, to be built upon in future years.