

# Dr. Kristine Martinsone – an Academic Pioneer

The story of Health Psychology in Latvia is the story of Kristine Martinsone

## Efrat Neter

EHPS National Delegate  
Officer

Dr. Martinsone is the first national delegate from Latvia in the EHPS (since 2012). Currently, she is an associate professor at Riga

Stradins University and Head of Department of Health Psychology and Pedagogy (DHPP) at the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare. The department offers undergraduate and graduate courses for psychology students as well as for students in related fields of health and social studies.

Kristine has a rich educational background: beside a bachelor, master's and doctoral degrees in psychology with qualification as psychologist, she studied pedagogical education (master's degree and teacher qualification), and education in the field of medicine (professional master's degree in health as well as an art therapist qualification).

Dr. Martinsone is an academic pioneer. She started to work at Riga Stradins University in 2006. The university has long been the only medical school in Latvia, and started broadening its curriculum in the 1990s. Together with colleagues, Kristine has created a bachelor's program in psychology and has established, and for several years led, the master's program in arts therapy (which is a regulated by the medical profession in Latvia). Furthermore, she assembled a group of psychology lecturers at the Faculty of Rehabilitation to develop and license the first (and so far the only) Latvian masters in "Health Psychology", in which the first students were admitted in 2013. At present 25 students are enrolled. Indeed, Kristine received a Letter of Acknowledgement from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia for the development of health psychology in Latvia in 2014.

Kristine realized the need to create a professional association for the health psychologists graduating from the master's program. Hence, the Latvian Health Psychology Association (LHPA) was established in 2012, uniting specialists, researchers and stakeholders in health psychology, and Dr. Martinsone became its chairperson. The goal of the LHPA is to position health psychology in the fields of health and psychology, to develop its legal regulations, and to introduce EHPS activities in Latvia. One of the first activities was a conference "Psychology in Healthcare", organized in collaboration with the Latvian Association of Clinical Psychologists (LACP) in 2013. Paul Norman gave the keynote address (his presence was partly supported by EHPS funds) and a lively discussion and debate was held on the role of psychologists in healthcare. In order to promote public awareness of health psychology, LKPA actively participated in the organization and implementation of Latvian Psychology Days in 2013 and 2014 (over 1,000 visitors), thus promoting recognition of health psychology.

Dr. Martinsone is active in public-professional domains: she is a member of the board of the Latvian Association of Psychologists, a member in the board of Union of Professional Organizations of Rehabilitation, and a member of LACP and Latvian Test Commission, and represents psychology in the Latvian Science Council. She has participated in the drafting of the Law on Psychologists, the current initiative that is intended to strengthen psychologists' professional scope, including the strengthening of health psychology.

Dr. Martinsone has participated in several EU-funded projects and has worked on international accreditation commissions. She has been the leader

and member of the organizing committee at more than 10 international scientific conferences, and she is an editorial board member of several scientific journals. She has participated in more than 50 international conferences, and has authored/co-authored more than 200 scientific publications, including her work as a compiler and scientific editor of collective monographs, collections of articles, and textbooks.

In the research domain, Kristine was the leading researcher in several grants financed by the Latvian Science Council (2001-2006). Currently, Dr. Martinsone is involved in two National Research Programmes (2014-2017), the first focusing on clinical multidimensional personality test development, and the second on societal transformation in terms of values and action models in periods of social and economic changes.

Kristine has three grown children, two daughters and a son. She loves to travel, especially to exotic countries and locations to explore the world's cultural and spiritual heritage and meet different people. Her motto is: *The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.*



Kristine Martinsone  
Riga Stradins University  
Kristine.Martinsone@rsu.lv