

# CLOSING ADDRESS



Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

The 10th IMMH conference has come to an end. Let us check to see to what extent we have fulfilled our mission statement:

1. *Did we grow in terms of an international forum?*

The answer is yes, we had delegates from 15 countries as opposed to earlier conferences where we had up to 11 countries.

2. *Was it a forum where practitioners met researchers?*

The answer is “yes”. It suffices to look at the column “organization” on the attendees list to see the variety in background and occupation.

3. *Did we cover all facets of the human being; i.e. the bio-psycho-socio-spiritual domains and their interactions?*

The answer is once more “yes”. We had wonderful presentations which gave us some insight into the structure of the brain and in its functioning. Although some answers were given, they evoked as many questions as well. Aside from the biological sciences, we have psychologists supporting people in different ways: from the field psychologist over to the therapist to scientist; not to forget the social aspect represented e.g. by community nurses; and last but not least we have never had so many chaplains in the auditorium. What about the “field experts” like commanders? We are very pleased with the interest shown by some junior leaders but I would really be happy if, in the future, we could also welcome some more experienced leaders and decision makers. As stressed in the opening address, all experts are in the first place there to support the core business of Defence by optimizing the performance of the soldier in the field.

4. *Finally, did we reach some guidelines for best practice?*

If we do not have anything on paper yet, we all have at least a number of messages or lessons-learned that we take home. Through formal and informal discussions, in syndicates and in the bar with a drink, we reached a growing understanding of each other’s strengths and weaknesses, of the opportunities and pitfalls of systems and structures.

At the start MUPS was like a closed house for most of us. Now, we have discovered that it is a house with several floors and a lot of rooms. The techniques presented are like keys that open doors, but on entering a

room you find 10 other doors leading to unknown rooms. We, as mental health professionals, have a number of these keys in our hands. Going back to the leading theme of the conference “MUPS are perhaps PEPS”, after this conference we can contend that MUPS are at least partially PEPS. The challenge is to enhance our knowledge about causes and effects.

The mark of attention the presenters received has a high symbolic value with respect to the ideas above: a torch to light the way in exploring the dark world of unknown mental health issues like MUPS.

Thus, taken all together, the 10<sup>th</sup> IMMHC has been a success of the whole line. The 10<sup>th</sup> IMMHC is dead; long live the 11<sup>th</sup> IMMHC (Sofia, Bulgaria)!

Prof Dr Jacques Mylle  
Chairman IMMHC