

# Karen Woodall

Psychotherapist, Writer, Trainer, Researcher

## 11.7.2017 – An Historic Day in Europe

Date: 12 Jul 2017 Author: karenwoodall 16 Comments

European Association of  
**Parental  
Alienation  
Practitioners**

HOME ABOUT PRAHA 2017



Yesterday, in Prague, a major step in practice with parental alienation occurred, as colleagues from fourteen countries in Europe met to form the European Association of Parental Alienation Practitioners. The day was described as an historic event by Bill Bernet, President of the Parental Alienation Study Group, pictured here.



Throughout the day it became clear that parental alienation and the internationally recognised approaches to treating the problem, raise the same concerns in all of the countries represented by colleagues attending the meeting. Lack of understanding, lack of acceptance of parental alienation, lack of intervention which effectively treats the issue and blocks and barriers to effective practice. Throughout the day there was an overwhelming consensus for the need for a unified European approach to the problem and colleagues heard from Prof. dr. sc. Gordana Buljan Flander, Director of the Child Protection Center of Zagreb (pictured below) on the work done in Croatia to educate and change practice via partnership with the Family Separation Clinic in London.



Later in the day discussions were held between colleagues on the need for the new European Association and the role it will play in setting standards, regulating practice and protecting members. There was a firm agreement that all of these things plus education, awareness raising and practitioner development will be a core part of the work going forward.



The day was filled with discussion about the difficulties faced by practitioners, the resistance to the interventions which properly help children and the need to continue the fight to get parental alienation properly recognised and responded to in each member country. The day was filled with hope however and love and laughter and a special birthday song for Dr Simona Vladica from Romania, pictured below.

This world in which we work, is so full of challenge that it was a joy to share with colleagues a day to celebrate our strengths and successes. I found myself, throughout the day, feeling the same respite from the often unpleasant dynamic of working in isolation in the UK. I ended the day feeling reinvigorated and deeply contented that the work of EAPAP, to protect practitioners and thereby build a strong workforce response to the problem of parental alienation in Europe has begun.

Returning from Prague I read the latest newsletter from the Parental Alienation Study Group and knew that what had happened during that day was all the more important. Reading the claim from someone in the UK, that it is possible to intervene successfully in alienation cases and be a member of the UK regulating bodies BACP and UKCP made me smile. It is not. As a supervisor of practitioners in the UK, I regularly have to ensure that practitioners who are members of such bodies have to act in ways which fall far short of recognised international standards to ensure that they do not end up being complained about and sanctioned. I regularly have to restrict intervention in such cases in order to protect the practitioner.

What people are doing when they make such a claim, is exactly the reason why EAPAP is necessary. The claim comes from the belief that the need to remain on the right side of a practitioner body is more important than the interventions which are known to work. That



belief comes from adapting interventions to suit the practitioner not the family. Any governing body, which does not recognise parental alienation in terms of the evidence based interventions which work for children, will always ensure that the practitioner falls short of the required standards of practice which work. Instead of adapting their practice to match the internationally recognised standards of intervention, such people adapt the research to match their own belief system or that of a governing body. Which is fine if what you are primarily concerned with is calling yourself a parental alienation 'expert', rather than achieving significant change for children. It is not fine if in the process one is attempting to promote as effective, interventions that are not based on the internationally curated and recognised standards of practice. Family therapy, mentalisation approaches and all of the other generic forms of therapy which are accepted by BACP or UKCP in the UK does not work with parental alienation. Further, there is no evidence available to support claims that they do.

This is the reason why EAPAP is such an important step in this field, it will prevent the blocks and barriers to forward movement which are caused by those who seek to restrict and restrain practice. And it will challenge those who claim they are expert in this field but who are not capable of demonstrating success. Breaking existing boundaries of understanding, knowledge and intervention and resetting them where they need to be to help alienated children, is one of our primary goals. Liberating practitioners so that they can do the work which is necessary to help children is another. Successful outcomes are our concern, not the limitations caused by slavish adherence to the requirements of existing bodies. There was universal agreement, from practitioners in every member country, at the conference yesterday, about all of these important points.

EAPAP is necessary to create a strong, courageous and determined workforce in the field of parental alienation and to prevent families from being subjected to this dumbed down approach. EAPAP will curate and codify international standards of practice and will educate, train and inform at every level in each member country. With strong and vibrant members who hold significant power in terms of the European agenda on the wellbeing of children, this work will progress quickly and I am delighted to be part of it.

With grateful thanks to all colleagues who took time to travel, some at great distance via Istanbul (from Malta and Sweden) and those who had to travel by bus from Vienna due to flight problems. The courage and tenacity of such a group of people will truly change the world for those who practice in this field, the families we help and most of all the children who suffer the problem of parental alienation.

Make no mistake, what happened in Prague yesterday was a significant shift in the collective consciousness in Europe around parental alienation. As colleagues return to their own countries, each I hope, as inspired and recharged as we were, expect great things from us. We are collectively, being the change we want to see in the world.

*A conference paper will be prepared which will set out the stated aims of the European Association of Parental Alienation Practitioners, this will be made available to the public.*

*The European Association of Parental Alienation Practitioners will convene regular meetings to develop its membership and accreditation scheme for all practitioners working with alienated children and their families in Europe.*

*I will be on the panel at the PASG conference in Washington in October with Deirdre Rand and Linda Gottlieb.*

*I will also be speaking at the PASG conference in Sweden in August 2018.*

*The Family Separation Clinic in conjunction with the European Association of Parental Alienation Practitioners will hold a major two day conference in London in summer 2018 which is headlined by Amy J.L. Baker PhD, along with key European practitioners. For legal and mental health professionals and entitled 'Moving Upstream (to tackle the problem of parental alienation),' parts of this conference will be streamed live around the world.*

**And hot off the press – the news that our book, *Understanding Parental Alienation: Learning to Cope, Helping to Heal* (Charles C Thomas – Illinois), is about to go into print.**

## Published by karenwoodall

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### 16 thoughts on “11.7.2017 – An Historic Day in Europe”

#### Add Comment

1. **Paul says:**

**12 Jul 2017 at 9:53 am**

It's sad that you have to 'reign in' those that challenge PA, whereas in my experience those that want to reinforce false allegations seem to have no comeback, with the protection of 'claiming' to be acting in the interest of the child, whilst ultimately choosing a 'side' and aiming to aid to vilify the targeted parent.

I applaud you for all the work you are doing Karen. You do have strong support in the UK. I expect you cant always see it, but it's there. Thank you.

Reply

1. **karenwoodall says:**

**13 Jul 2017 at 2:41 pm**

Thank you Paul for your support. A strong part of our discussion at the meeting was about false allegations and how we deal with them as practitioners. We will, as time goes on, build an influential body with the capacity to train the police and other services around the family on such matters. We are being bold in all that we do so that we can properly change the landscape we work in with families.

you are right that there are times when it becomes difficult to see the support (especially when dodging the negative arrows) but I do know it is there and it is always good to be reminded. Thank you. K

Reply

2. **Helen Dudden says:**

**12 Jul 2017 at 11:59 am**

I sincerely applaud too. Damage to children seems to have been ignored. I know from personal experience. I've cried at times felt totally helpless, no one could help or listen.

Reply

1. **karenwoodall says:**

**13 Jul 2017 at 2:42 pm**

Thank you Helen. I have not had much time to respond to emails and other matters this past week but I am catching up now and will respond to your email to me. You are right, damage to children has been ignored, we are aiming to put that right. K

Reply

3. **McGovern says:**

**12 Jul 2017 at 4:50 pm**

Truly wonderful to see a Europe wide association of foremost experts coming together to lobby, educate and pressurise for recognition and addressing of this most thorny of problems. And especially wonderful to see you Karen being at the top table, where your decades of ceaseless campaigning and expertise in this field will have so much more effect.

Reply

1. **karenwoodall says:**

**13 Jul 2017 at 2:53 pm**

Thank you MG.

EAPAP will protect practitioners in the UK and around Europe.

This is my 'revenge' for what was done to me in 2015 – I turned a negative into a positive for children.

And I am absolutely proud of what I have done.

Reply

4. **Erik van der Waal - HerVerbinden.nl says:**

**12 Jul 2017 at 8:21 pm**

Thank you very much Karen and Nick for being the driving forces behind EAPAP being setup. Also Bill Bernet for his support. It was great to be part of this day and all specialists from the various countries who attended will remember it as an inspiring and motivating day.

I am looking forward working with you and all of the EAPAP / SAPG members in the future!

Kind regards,

Erik van der Waal

The Netherlands

<http://www.HerVerbinden.nl>

Reply

1. **karenwoodall says:**

**12 Jul 2017 at 8:56 pm**

Dear Erik, your quiet presence and powerful thoughts are such a welcome part of this initiative, I am so pleased to know you and look forward to building this wonderful movement together. K

Reply



**5. Helen Dudden says:****12 Jul 2017 at 9:16 pm**

How do we repair the damage already in done. Beth Alexander and her twins in Vienna, another case far from being resolved. I'm the only one to have seen my grandson for many years. He is now 15 years, taken and retained at 2 years old. I'm his paternal grandmother. I've been unwell for a year unable to travel.

Of course, there are many more who need urgent help, this is only way to make our point, publicly on a web page.

I've spoken in the House of Commons, got involved in law, made comments on the failings of Hague and Brussels 11a.

All this needs to be addressed!!

Reply

**6. Linda Turner says:****13 Jul 2017 at 7:31 am**

Reblogged this on Parental Alienation.

Reply

**7. daveyone1 says:****13 Jul 2017 at 4:08 pm**

Reblogged this on World4Justice : NOW! Lobby Forum..

Reply

**8. Martina Martin says:****16 Jul 2017 at 4:02 pm**

May God bless you all in the work. I pray that the courts will only allow members of EAPAP to give opinion and testify in cases involving PA.

I am in Ireland and only know of 3 persons that may qualify as members of EAPAP. Are there more?

Reply

**9. Carl says:****17 Jul 2017 at 4:27 am**

Well Done Ma'am. Xx

Let the quickening begin.

Reply

**10. Carl says:****17 Jul 2017 at 4:28 am**

One giant leap. x

Reply

**11. Erin says:****15 Aug 2017 at 6:15 am**

Thank you from the United States. I have read that Mexico and Brazil have passed powerful legislation. Here there are pockets of awareness with some judges, but the mental health professionals we have employed have not helped. Dr. Craig Childress has found a way to diagnose Psychological Child Abuse completely from the DSMV. I'll be presenting his argument to our court ordered "reunification" therapist. I recently got a ruling in my favor demanding an in depth evaluation. The evaluation should reveal the narcissistic/borderline personality traits. I would think and hope. Thank you all so

much for your brave work. The hope that this gives me helps me. I am learning to be a stronger person. May God protect our children during the time it takes to bring about the needed change.

Reply

1. **karenwoodall says:**

**15 Aug 2017 at 6:56 am**

Dear Erin, I am sorry to hear of the horrible time you are having. You are correct that in Mexico, Brazil and Romania there is legislative change to tackle this problem. I understand that there is widespread belief that there is a way to diagnose the issue of parental alienation using the DSM criteria, let's hope that the evaluation does reveal the narcissistic/borderline traits, if it doesn't however, where will that leave you? Not all children's splitting is caused by narcissistic/borderline traits in an alienating parent unfortunately, this is where the proposals you believe in fails. In coercive control situations, it is the unresolved rage behaviours which cause the splitting in the child which may or may not be part of a narcissistic/borderline personality disorder. My view is that the diagnostics being promulgated as the answer will leave many children who are psychologically split (and therefore alienated from a parent) in the care of a parent who is not narcissistic or borderline but nevertheless alienating. My worry is what will all those rejected parents, whose children say they don't want to see them, do then? It will mean they are not alienated but still rejected and presumably without any recognition or support whatsoever. Don't put all your faith in one magic answer, not all alienating parents are narcissistic/borderline – I know, I have them evaluated regularly, a parent can be alienating and not personality disordered. I hope it works out well for you. K

Reply

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