Report of the IPSO – event in Lisbon

“Where is the golden couch?” Dialogue with candidates

The past IPSO – event in Lisbon (“Where is the golden couch?” Dialogue with candidates) took place on the 5th of December 2014 and was very well received by the Portuguese candidates. The meeting had a participation of 63 people.

Before that event took place, our guest, Dr. Howard Levine also gave a conference in the University of Coimbra, on the 4th of December 2014. This event was conceived with the purpose not just to raise awareness of Portuguese students about the existence of contemporary psychoanalytical work, but also to open the dialogue for people who are interested in psychoanalytical thinking. This event was a result of a collaboration between IPSO and the University of Coimbra, whereby 100 participants were present at the conference, that was entitled “Changing views on aggression”.

In Lisbon, we were delighted to have Dr. Howard Levine with us, who worked with the candidates throughout the day. Additionally, we were glad to have 2 associated members participating with their presentations and contributing with their ideas to the joint reflections. The event was conceived in three parts, being the first one composed by two panels with two speakers each (one speaker an associated member and the other one a candidate), followed by a supervision with Dr. Levine. The second part consisted in a reflection formulated by the President of the Portuguese Society of Psychoanalysis, the President of the Institute of Psychoanalysis and the President of the Teaching Commission about the problems that candidates have to face in present times. The third and last part was dedicated to an open conference given by Dr. Levine who presented the paper: “Clinical Implications of unrepresented states: effacement, discourse and construction.”

 The main intention of this event was to involve the Portuguese candidates in a dialogue, that would consider their actual questions and needs facing the time of global change, emphasizing particularly issues linked to the first contact with patients in the first interviews, as well as to the reflections to be made when the “classic” setting suffers changes. In relation to these themes, the debates revealed that candidates share the impression of how important the first contact can be for the beginning and continuity of the therapeutical/ analytical relationship and what has to be considered and elaborated also by the candidate, in order to understand better his countertransference. The presentations related to the new settings refer to the problems of maintaining a classic configuration of the analytical setting, not just due to the increasing mobility of people in their professional situations, but also due to factors that are of a more personal and profound nature, which are linked to the inner world of the individual. In this sense, it was possible to discuss the difficulties with patients who avoid proximity and who can eventually be lost to the therapeutical/ psychoanalytical treatment if not some changes are considered in relation to the setting.

Concerning the feedback of the candidates, we were very satisfied to hear of how important the meeting was for them, in the sense that they could identify themselves with the contents of the program, on the one hand, experiencing as a group of candidates, on the other hand, that they are confronted with similar problems. In our subsequent perspective, the meeting opened space for a constructive reflection that enabled the candidates to organize some important thoughts and ideas for clinical practice and therefore for the development of a psychoanalytical process, promoting at the same time their feeling of being understood in their eventual doubts and conflicts.