



European Network for
Social and Emotional Competence

Newsletter

Issue 31
December 2024

Advancing Social and Emotional Learning Together

Welcome Note

As we close the year 2024, we reflect on the milestones achieved and look forward to the exciting opportunities ahead for the European Network for Social and Emotional Competence (ENSEC). This year has been one of growth, innovation, and collaboration within the field of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). One of the key highlights was the 9th ENSEC Conference in Chania, Greece, where over 120 experts and practitioners from 25 countries came together to share insights and foster partnerships. Hosted by the University of Patras, the conference offered thought-provoking keynotes, workshops, and symposia, inspiring fresh approaches to SEL, resilience, and mental health. We also mourned the loss of Dr. Kathy Evans, a founding ENSEC member and former Chair. Her dedication to children's emotional well-being and her legacy of impactful work remind us of the importance of our mission.

Looking ahead, we welcome Professor Maria Poulou as the new Chair of ENSEC. The semester also saw the launch of initiatives like the Erasmus+ projects and the promotion of SEL through publications and webinars. Our focus remains on fostering inclusive collaborations that bring tangible benefits to educators, students, and their communities.

We thank all ENSEC members, partners, and contributors for your dedication. Together, let's continue building a future where social and emotional learning is at the forefront of education and well-being.

Warm regards,

Sanja Tatalović Vorkapić, Paula Lebre and Adriana Frazão



**IN MEMORIAM DR
KATHY EVANS** 2

SEL INITIATIVES

9th ENSEC Conference 5

Transformative
Educational Leadership 7

Erasmus Mundus Master
Resilience in Education
Settings 2025-2027 –
Scholarships 8

PUBLICATIONS

New papers and books 9

Call for papers 13

PROJECTS

ThrivingSchools 15

Eduskills+SEL 16

ENSEC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Webinar and special
interest group 17

Chairs of ENSEC 18

<https://www.enseceurope.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/enseceurope/>

IN MEMORIAM DR KATHY EVANS

With great sadness we announce the passing away from cancer of our dear friend and colleague, Dr Kathy Evans, at l'Hôpital de Bergerac, France, in October 2024. Kathy was actively involved in ENSEC from its very first conference in Malta in 2007 right up to the 2024 conference in Chania, Greece. We were joint ENSEC Chairs for 6 years from 2011-2017 during which time Kathy took her role very seriously and was a constant source of creative ideas.



Kathy with Carmen and Renata

We will never forget her enthusiasm for ENSEC and her deep commitment to the emotional health and wellbeing of children. Kathy integrated her many roles as parent, foster parent, partner, grandmother, teacher in special education schools, researcher, author and Course Director at the University of South Wales MA in Child and Adolescent Mental Health. She was full of practical ideas to help parents and caregivers meet the challenge of rearing children. In *Supporting Parental Wellbeing*, co-authored with Rob Long, she recommended that parents take account of their own wellbeing and offered wise guidance on ways of strengthening it to develop positive relationships with their children.

Another book, *Supporting Children at Home*, also co-authored with Rob Long, was a lifeline for parents during the stressful COVID pandemic lockdown period. She and Rob recognised the huge pressures on parents whether they were in lockdown with their children all day or whether they were separated from them because they were essential keyworkers. This book contained myriad activities for stimulating children at home through art, stories, music and drama.



Kathy after her PhD viva

She was committed to the work of ENSEC to the end and, although she was too ill to attend, wrote a paper for a symposium at the 2024 ENSEC conference in Chania, Crete, based on her chapter, with Lynn Gazal, *Interventions to challenge cyberbullying and online harassment: the perspective from schools* (in *Cyberbullying and Online Harms*, edited by Helen Cowie and Carrie-Anne Myers), which was published in 2023. Her imaginative paper was presented by Lynn Gazal to an appreciative audience. How we wished that she could have been there in person!

Kathy loved her house in France and often invited friends to stay.



Kathy outside her house in France

In fact, the 2013 ENSEC conference in Zagreb was planned and prepared from there. We remember her quiet way of working collaboratively with us all, gently inserting her practicality, enormous knowledge and vision into the process.



Kathy giving her lecture at the Zagreb conference

We all have memories of spending special times with her in the beautiful places where we held the conferences, having all kinds of conversations which ranged seamlessly around the academic, the practical and the personal. We remember reflections on our lovely surroundings as we walked, drank coffee and often had just plain good fun. She was wonderful company, and she became a dear, kind and compassionate friend.

Kathy was courageous in her fight against cancer. When it returned, she asked us to help her sift through the research literature on new cancer treatments. Here is one of her messages to us:

“Love you all :-) And one thing actually you can do for me if you get time - given you are all researchers - is when I confirm the type of cancer - you can help me research new and amazing treatments. I've decided to become an expert on it as one way forward. Kathy”

Kathy was such a fighter!

Right to the end of her life Kathy demonstrated her kindness to others. She insisted on sharing her hospital food – yogurts and fruit – with the close friends and her partner, Bruno, who were by her bedside in her final days. It was very important to her that they all sat and ate together. Perhaps even more poignant was her tolerance and kindness to the old men with dementia in the next room. One kept banging repetitively on the wall with a stick but Kathy never complained. The other one burst into her room one day and, while her friends assertively told him to leave, Kathy jumped to his defence and spoke to him in a soft reassuring way.



Kathy relaxing with Carmen and Renata



Having fun with Carmen and Celeste



Kathy with the ENSEC Chairs during the fourth ENSEC Conference at the University of Zagreb, Croatia, 2013 from left to right Paul Cooper, Carmen Huser, Carmel Cefai, Helen Cowie, Katherine Weare, Kathy Evans, Renata Miljević-Ridički (Celeste Simões took the photo)

Although Kathy is no longer with us, we still have many fond memories of her. We will never forget our dear friend.

Carmel, Carmen, Celeste, Helen, Katherine, Paul, Renata (former ENSEC Chairs)

9th ENSEC Conference

5-7 September 2024, Chania, Greece

The 9th ENSEC conference held in Greece was organized by the University of Patras. More than 120 participating experts, researchers, teachers and practitioners interested in SEL from 25 countries all over the world attended 4 keynote speeches (**Prof. Helen Skouteris**, from Monash University, Australia, **Prof. Eva Oberle**, from University of British Columbia, Canada, **Prof. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl**, University of Illinois, USA and **Prof. Stephen Elliot**, from Arizona State University), 19 oral presentations, 12 symposium, 16 workshops, and 40 poster presentations.



Prof. Helen Skouteris

It was our great honor to spend 3 days (5-7/8/2024) with colleagues from all over the world, in MAICH, a wonderful conference venue in Chania. We had the chance to share our ideas, listen to our colleagues' work, exchange our thoughts and join in productive dialogue. We are grateful for all the interesting, thought-provoking moments we encountered during the whole conference. We hope that all the participants were inspired, enriched with new ideas for collaboration in projects related to the field of SEL, resilience and mental health and remember the 9th ENSEC conference with pleasure.



Prof. Stephen Elliot



Prof. Eva Oberle



Prof. Ghassan Khalil

On behalf of the University of Patras, please allow me to express our gratitude to our key note speakers, ENSEC and SEBDA chairs and the *UNICEF* Representative in Greece, prof. [Ghassan Khalil](#). We also cordially thank each one of our participants. The success of this conference was because of their valuable presence and contribution.

I hope to meet again in the next ENSEC Conference, in 2026 in Portugal.

Thank you all! Eyxaristo!

Maria Poulou

9th ENSEC Chair



Transformative Educational Leadership

Youth Panel on Climate Education: NEW Videos!

You can watch the videos of the Youth Climate Justice Panel from our summer Mindfulness in Education Conference on “**Embodying Courage & Resilience as We Educate for Climate Justice.**” The panel was moderated by TEL's Linda Lantieri and Mychal Mills, and featured inspiring students from the NY Climate and Resilience Education Task Force - Ellery Spikes, Olivia Yim, Ethan Liu and Maggie Handelman.

[Full Panel Recording](#)

Selected Individual Clips:

[What do your peers feel about climate change and climate justice?](#)

[What can educators do to support the climate justice movement?](#)

[Youth and Climate Mental Health
What Gives Youth Hope Amidst the Climate Crises](#)

TEL Community Fall Conferences!

[TEL Gathering at Conference on Spirituality in Education Conference on October 26th](#)

[TEL Gathering in Chicago at SEL Exchange on Nov 13th](#)

TEL 2018-2023 Impact Report

We are honored to announce the publication of our new **TEL 2018 - 2023 Impact Report!**

In the report we share TEL's unique leadership development model, and about the **remarkable outcomes** and **inspiring stories** of TEL alumni from our first three TEL Fellowship cohorts. We invite you to [Download a copy.](#)

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree in Resilience in Education Settings 2025-2027

Application for Scholarships

Applications for scholarships for the third edition of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree in Resilience in Educational Settings starting in October 2025 are now open and close on 31st December 2024.

The Master is a **2 year full time programme offered conjointly by the University of Malta, University of Crete, University of Lisbon, and University of Suceava, Romania.**

Presently there are 18 students in the first edition (2023-2025) and 20 students on the second edition (2024-2026). A total of 20 scholarships are being offered for the third edition (2025-2027).

Applications may be submitted online at www.flourishproject.mt



Published papers in 2024

Promoting teachers' well-being through a serious game intervention: A qualitative exploration of teachers' experiences

Cavioni, V., Ornaghi, V., & Conte, E. (2024)
Frontiers in Psychology, 15,1339242
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1339242>

Exploring stress factors and coping strategies in Italian teachers after COVID-19: Evidence from qualitative data

Conte, E., Cavioni, V., & Ornaghi, V. (2024)
Education Sciences, 14(2)
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14020152>

The adverse dyadic friendship (ADF): An exploratory retrospective view of female adolescent

Korem, A., & Tatar, M. (2024)
Journal of Adolescence, 1-10
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jad.12434>

Promoting theory of mind and emotion understanding in preschool settings: an exploratory training study

Grazzani I. (2024)
Frontiers in psychology, 15, 1439824
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1439824>

Publication of the International Journal of Emotional Education

Volume 16, Issue 2 is published



Volume 16 Issue 2 of the [International Journal of Emotional Education \(IJEE\)](#) has just been published by the [Centre for Resilience and Socio-Emotional Health](#).

Eight papers and short research reports by various authors from around the world address issues related to various aspects of the wellbeing and social and emotional competence of university students and teaching staff, as well as social and emotional learning in schools.

The IJEE is an open access, indexed, electronic journal which is distributed free of charge and supported by an international board of reviewers with high level expertise in the field. It may be accessed [online](#).

Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning

2nd edition

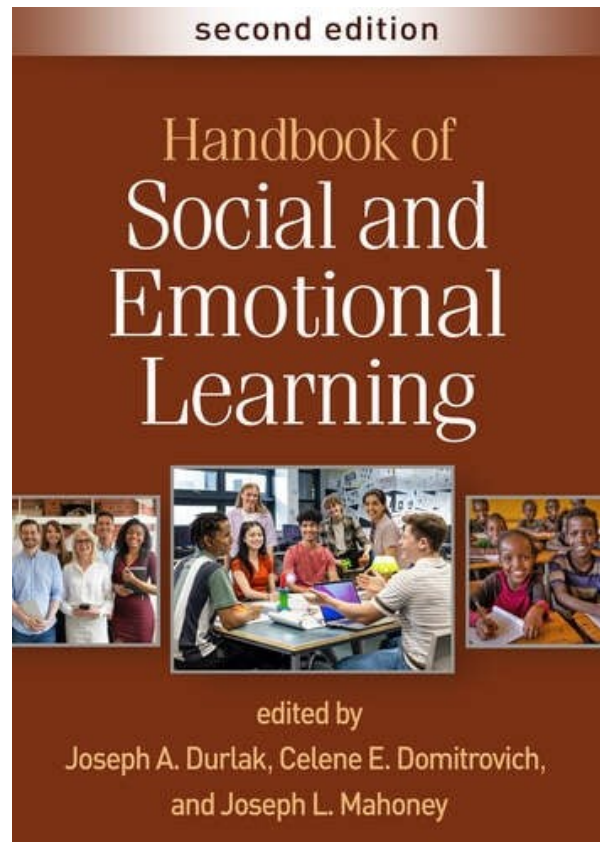
The second edition of the Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning (edited by Joseph Durlak, Celene Domitrovich and Joseph Mahoney) has just been published by Guildford Press in December 2024. In this revised second edition, “the world’s leading SEL scholars describe state-of-the-art interventions that build students’ competencies for managing emotions, showing empathy for others, forming supportive relationships, and making responsible decisions. The scientific underpinnings of SEL are explored and its impact on academic achievement and behavior is examined. The Handbook **discusses ways to assess SEL and design effective, developmentally and culturally informed programs for students in preschool through secondary school settings and beyond**”.

New to this edition is an **International Section** consisting of six chapters on international SEL efforts, discussing both developed and developing countries. We are happy to note the work of ENSEC has been acknowledged by two chapters in the international section, namely **SEL on the World Stage** (Carmel Cefai & Celeste Simoes) and **SEL in the European Context** (Neil Humphrey, Valeria Cavioni, & Maria Poulou):

“This increase in research and programs has been strengthened by the European Network for Social and Emotional Competence (ENSEC), established in 2009. ENSEC allowed SEL experts across Europe to establish collaborative projects and disseminate knowledge and good practice in the field of SEL promotion” (Humphrey, Cavioni & Poulou, p.496).

Further information may be found at:

https://www.routledge.com/Handbook-of-Social-and-Emotional-Learning-Second-Edition/Durlak-Domitrovich-Mahoney/p/book/9781462555611?srsIid=AfmBOoqYxXVLMqY4fQyAl4003a_LPi8MSAzhFdl6jVoTWAVosZ5



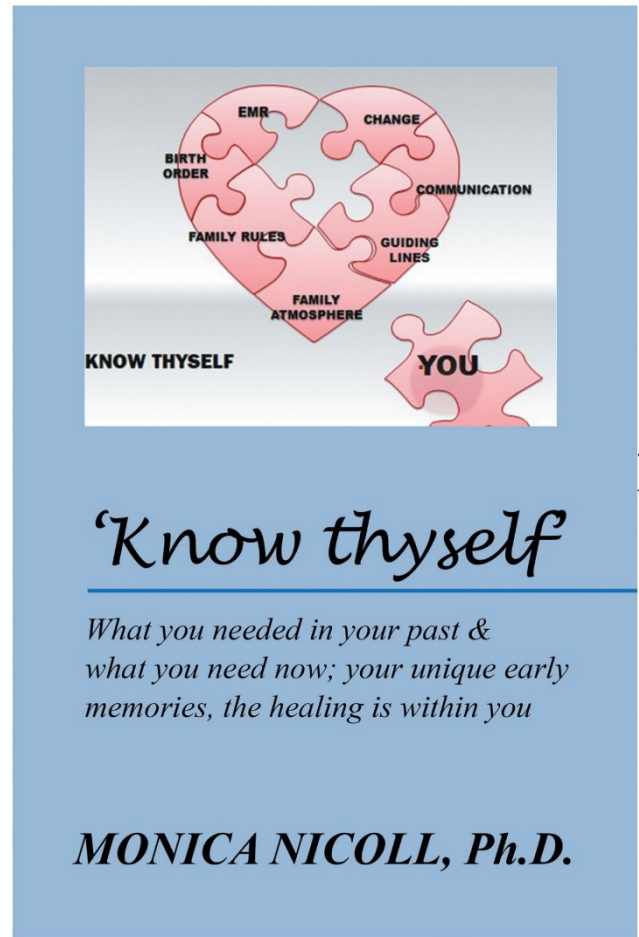
'Know Thyself'

New book

Turning the pages to your new beginnings; what you needed in your past and what you need now; your unique early memories that speak to your healing within you. This book is a gift to you; **a heartfelt connection to your embedded limiting beliefs found in your specific early memories.** Deeply understanding the language of the why you respond the way you do and why you feel the way you do even into why you notice the things you do. You matter and you are worth the work!

<https://www.amazon.com/Know-thyself-needed-memories-healing/dp/B0DLH3RW1P>

Monica Nicoll



Social and Emotional Learning in Schools

Call for papers special issue in Behavioural Sciences

Special Issue

Social and Emotional Learning in Schools

Message from the Guest Editors

Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs positively impact socioemotional skills, attitudes, pro-social behavior, behavioral problems, and school performance. The aim of this Special Issue is to compile recent research on social and emotional learning (SEL), pedagogy, and educational psychology, with a focus on innovative teaching and learning practices across different countries. Moreover, the aim is to present scientific perspectives from various stakeholders, including curriculum developers, practitioners, and researchers, to conceptualize, assess, and develop creative pedagogical concepts beneficial for 21st-century educational contexts. Topics of interest include the integration of SEL into curricula and its impact on student outcomes; strategies for fostering social and emotional competence, empathy, and resilience; the role of SEL in promoting inclusive and equitable education; the assessment and evaluation of SEL programs; and the perspectives of teachers and students on SEL implementation and its challenges. This Issue will also explore how SEL can improve overall well-being and life satisfaction in educational settings.

Guest Editors

Dr. Markus Talvio

Prof. Dr. Marco Ferreira

Prof. Dr. Marlies Matischek-Jauk

Deadline for manuscript submissions

30 September 2025



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Children's Well-Being and Mental Health in an Educational Context

*Call for papers special issue in
Children*

Special Issue

Children's Well-Being and Mental Health in an Educational Context

Message from the Guest Editor

The main aim of this Special Issue is to address the major issues regarding children's well-being and mental health within an educational context. Tentative research topics could be related to children's well-being during their transitional periods within the learning continuum; the impact of digitalization on children's lives; the student-teacher relationship; evidence-based programs and curriculums aiming to improve children's and teachers' well-being and mental health; cooperation between parents, teachers, and children in an educational context in regards to children's well-being; teachers' mental health and well-being in contemporary kindergartens and schools; and all other related issues. With the aim of providing solid contributions to this field of science, this Special Issue is open to scientists and practitioners in the fields of psychology, pedagogy, educational sciences, social pedagogy, and related fields. We look forward to receiving your valuable research work.

Guest Editor

Prof. Dr. Sanja Tatalović Vorkapić
Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia

Deadline for manuscript submissions

5 May 2025



Children

an Open Access Journal
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ThrivingSchools: A Systemic, Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being

*ERASMUS-EDU-2024-POL-EXP
(European Policy Experimentation)*

Partners: Greece, Cyprus, Romania, Italy

Research consistently shows the links between **school climate, student and teacher well-being, social and emotional competencies**, and academic performance. The "Thriving Schools" proposal draws on principles from Positive Psychology, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and Whole School Approaches to **create supportive environments** that foster the well-being of both teachers and students.

Public education authorities, universities, research centers, and NGOs from Greece, Italy, Cyprus, and Romania collaborate to build on past initiatives, directly contributing to the call's priority of **promoting well-being at school for all teachers, staff, and learners**.

The objectives are to promote mental health and well-being literacy, develop a positive school climate, and empower educators with innovative practices and resources. These will be achieved through an evidence-based framework, extensive capacity building for teachers, and the **implementation of the PERMA model and Positive Psychology interventions**.

Each school will establish a core team of Well-being Champions who will work with a coach to implement a yearly plan of activities. A randomized controlled trial will assess the impact of the intervention on schoolteachers' well-being, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, children's well-being, outcomes, and school climate.

A total of 40 schools, 400 teachers, 2000 learners, and 500 parents will engage in this research. Evidence-based policy and practice recommendations will be disseminated widely.

The proposal's relevance to the program is demonstrated by its focus on improving **educational outcomes, equity, and well-being for all learners**, and alignment with EU priorities and policies such as the Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success, "A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools" (Cefai et al., 2021), and the recent EC (2024) report on "Wellbeing and mental health at school: Guidelines for school leaders, teachers and educators".

The participation of Milano-Bicocca: Department of Human Science for Education (DISUF)

*Responsible for Milano Bicocca team:
Prof. Guido Veronese*

*Senior Scholar of the Team:
Prof. Ilaria Grazzani (ENSEC Member)*

Eduskills+SEL: Fostering Social and Emotional Learning in Kindergartens

Erasmus+ KA2 project

The third working meeting of the project was held in Rijeka, at the Faculty of Teacher Education, on 28th and 29th October 2024, and was attended by partners from Italy, Germany, Slovenia and Zagreb. **The aim of the meeting was to discuss the proposed structure of the guidelines developed by teams from universities from Italy and Croatia.**

The final structure of the guidelines was agreed upon, along with the development of additional stories that will enrich the material. Kindergartens presented the final form of goals and outcomes, and how they approach the development of activities for working with children in kindergartens. The development of a research design and a survey that will evaluate the impact of the implemented activities in kindergartens was announced.

With the aim of promoting the project, and in cooperation with AMPEU for the purpose of marking the 8th ERASMUS DAYS, on 15th October 2024, the project team of the University of Rijeka held a webinar in English, which you can watch following this link: <https://youtu.be/Jf8jQm1jXol> .

Also, the project team of the University of Rijeka actively participated with the presentation of the project entitled: "How to foster social-emotional learning in kindergartens: Overview of the EduSkills+SEL project" at the 31st Annual Conference of Psychologists, which took place from 6-9th November 2024 in Opatija. This year, 600 participants participated in the conference.

Sanja Tatalović Vorkapić
(sanjatv@uniri.hr)



ENSEC Webinar: Enhancing Social and Emotional Well-being in Children and Teachers

Call for contributions from ENSEC members – until 15th January

We are delighted to extend this invitation to you as a potential contributor to the Celebrating SEL DAY webinar on **February 28th, 2025**.

We are organizing a webinar on the topic: **Enhancing Social and Emotional Well-being in Children and Teachers**

The presentations should be based on research results about the social and emotional well-being of children and teachers, and their significant determinants.

So, we are inviting those ENSEC members who are leading/participating in a research project to share your evidence-based results with us.

Those interested should send an abstract of 100-150 words (with keywords: 4-6) that is closely related to the aim of the webinar.

Please, send your contribution to an e-mail sanijatv@uniri.hr no later than January 15th, 2025.

We are looking forward to your contributions,

ENSEC Chairs

Early-Career Research Meetings

Preregistration for this special interest group- until 15th February

We are excited to announce the first meeting of our Early-Career Research Special Interest Group! This initiative aims to bring together emerging **researchers in the field of social-emotional learning** to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and support each other's professional growth.

If you are a young researcher up to five years after completion of their doctoral studies at an international higher education institution or a PhD student completed the University's requirements for a doctoral degree at the time of application.

And

You are an ENSEC Member ([It is easy to be an ENSEC member!](#))

Please, send an email to adrianafrazao.pm@gmail.com with your name, affiliation, and a brief introduction about your research interests, until 15th February 2025.

In **March 2025** (day to be confirmed) we will have the first online ENSEC early-career research meeting. We'll send you more detailed information closer to the date.

We are looking forward meeting your motivations,

ENSEC Chairs

Welcome Prof. Maria Poulou as the New Chair of ENSEC!

We are delighted to announce and warmly welcome **Prof. Maria Poulou**, as the new Chair of ENSEC. She is Professor in the Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education, at the University of Patras, Greece. With a distinguished career, she has published over 100 articles and book chapters on classroom management, emotional and behavioral difficulties, teachers' professional development and promoting mental health at schools. She is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the British Psychological Society (BPS), and the British Educational Research Association (BERA).



She is a coordinator of European and International programs, a member of editorial board, and grant recipient of Salzburg scholar, International School Psychology Research Initiative, and Fulbright. Prof. Maria Poulou will bring her expertise and vision for our network, which will contribute toward new achievements and opportunities under ENSEC mission.

Together, let's continue shaping the future of our field!

Call for the post of ENSEC Chair 2025-2028

ENSEC will be receiving applications for the post of ENSEC Chair 2025-2028. It is expected that the new ENSEC CHAIRS will start from June 2025, with a transition period April-June 2025. All ENSEC members are welcome to apply in order to be part of a small team of joint chairs working collaboratively to facilitate the operation of the Network and coordinate its activities.

Amongst other responsibilities, the team will be responsible to organize and participate regularly in the Chairs's meetings, to report decisions to members, to disseminate information about ENSEC's and members' activities, to publish the newsletter, to support to organize the ENSEC conference every two years, to maintain and regularly update the ENSEC website and Facebook, to facilitate and promote research projects amongst the members, and to monitor ENSEC's activities according to the agreed objectives.

Applicants must be ENSEC full members for at least two years and will need to submit a letter of application for the post and a three-year plan of action detailing what they plan to do during their time as ENSEC chair.

Further information may also be obtained from the ENSEC chairs.

Please submit your letter of application and plan of action via email to ensec.europe@gmail.com by **February 15, 2025**. In the subject line, please write "application ENSEC chair."



ENSEC Chairs

Sanja Tatalović Vorkapić, PhD., Full professor, Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Rijeka, Rijeka, Croatia

Ana Paula Lebre Dos Santos Branco Melo, PhD., Assistant Professor, Faculdade de Motricidade Humana, University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal

Maria Polou, PhD, Associate professor, University of Patras, Greece

ENSEC Co-chairs' assistant

Adriana Frazão, psychomotor therapist, Faculdade Motricidade Humana, Portugal,

ENSEC Honorary Chairs

Paul Cooper, Professor, Brunel University London, UK

Carmel CEFAL, Director, Centre for Resilience & Socio-Emotional Health, University of Malta, Malta

