

Dear Ministry of Health and Care Services,

I would like to express my concern about the current plans to end the independent position of NKVTS.

NKVTS is a much needed player in the European psychotraumatology field. I believe I have the authority to state this

- because I have a long working relationship with NKVTS ever since its beginning 14 years ago and am impressed by their development,
- because I have been president of the European Society for traumatic Stress Studies (ESTSS) and am well aware of how much effort it takes to build such a center,
- because I am director of the Center for psychological Trauma in Amsterdam UMC and thus appreciate the role of such a center,
- because I am editor in Chief of the European Journal of Psychotraumatology (EJPT) and this group has contributed with high quality articles (e.g. on the Utoya shooting)
- and finally because I am the director of Research at Arq National Trauma Center in which NKVTS has an important role to play in the Arq Collaborative on Psychotrauma where we have a signed mutual agreement to work together to strengthen European psychotrauma.

We are all aware of the crucially important work done by NKVTS in particular in response to the Utoya shootings. During the last 14 years, NKVTS has succeeded in establishing a research community with high research standards, an interdisciplinary approach, and international recognition. Studies on child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, rape, disaster and terror attacks have provided Norway and the international community with crucial knowledge to implement adequate measures and enhance the level of care in child protection, children`s crisis centers and health services.

I was dismayed to hear that the Norwegian Government is currently considering a proposal from the Ministry of Health to incorporate the Norwegian Center on Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) into the Public Health Institute (FHI). As a result, Norway will no longer have an independent research institution that is only focusing on violence and traumatic stress studies. It is particularly important that Norway maintain an independent Norwegian Center on Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS). I am concerned this proposed move will weaken the quality of violence research conducted in Norway. It will also send a negative signal to the international community if the Norwegian government decides to reduce their focus on violence traumatic stress research.

Violence and traumatic stress affect many aspects in life, cause great sufferings, and impacts communities across the world. Societies need more research based knowledge to prevent violence and provide adequate services to affected populations. A focused and strong commitment from Governments and funders is needed to reach these goals, but we also need committed and

competent researchers to conduct relevant studies. Due to the complexity of these phenomena, our best chance to gain relevant knowledge is to combine academic disciplines from health professionals to the social sciences.

It takes time and efforts to develop successful research institutions such as NKVTS. There is obviously a need for continuous efforts in meeting the challenges on violence and traumatic stress, and the focus on this work may be hampered if NKVTS is incorporated into a large, broad based institute. We therefore urge you to reconsider this proposal, and to take the actions needed to make sure NKVTS can continue to develop and provide the Norwegian and international societies with interdisciplinary research based knowledge on violence and traumatic stress.

Sincerely,

Miranda Olf



Prof Dr Miranda Olf | Dept of psychiatry | Locatie AMC | PA3.128 | Meibergdreef 5,  
1005 AZ Amsterdam  
[www.amsterdamumc.nl](http://www.amsterdamumc.nl) | [www.amc.nl](http://www.amc.nl)

Director of Research | Arq Psychotrauma Expert Group | Diemen | [www.arq.org](http://www.arq.org)

Editor-in-Chief **European Journal  
of Psychotraumatology** ([www.tandfonline.com/ejpt](http://www.tandfonline.com/ejpt))

