

20 September 2017

Prof. Kostas Gavroglou

Minister of Education, Research & Religious Affairs

Prof. Maria Venetikou

Rector of TEI of Athens

Prof. Eirini Grammatopoulou

President of the Department of Physiotherapy at the TEI of Athens

A/Prof. Georgios Angelopoulos

Assistant Professor at the Department of History and Archeology of the Philosophical School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs

Prof. Triantafyllos Albanis

Professor at the Department of Chemistry of the University of Ioannina
Deputy Dean of the University of Ioannina

Prof. Spyros Georgatos

President of the National Council of Education and Human Resources
Professor of the Faculty of Medicine of the School of Health Sciences of the University of Ioannina

Prof. Nicoletta Paisidou

Professor of the Law School of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

President of the Quality Assurance and Certification Authority in Higher Education (ADIP)

Prof. Michalis Bratakos

Professor at the Department of Technology
President of TEI of Athens

Prof. Lazaros Vryzidis

Professor and President at TEI of Piraeus

Prof. Lois Panagiotis Lambrianidis

Professor at the Department of Economics of the University of Macedonia
General Secretary of Development Strategic and Private Investments of the Ministry of Economy and Development

Prof. Evangelos Kapetanakis

Professor at the School of Agriculture and Food Technology at TEI of Crete
President of TEI of Crete

Dear Professors

Re: Merging the School of Occupational Therapy and the School of Physical Therapy.

I am writing in response to news that the Ministry of Education, Research & Religious Affairs is intending to merge the School of Occupational Therapy and the School of Physical Therapy and deliver a common curriculum for Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy at the University of Western Attica.

The decision is of significant concern to the global physical therapy community and I urge you to reconsider.

The World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) is the sole international organisation for physical therapy, representing more than 350,000 physical therapists worldwide through its 112 member organizations. WCPT was founded in 1951 and since 1956, it has been a non-governmental organization (NGO) in official relations with the World Health Organization. WCPT is committed to moving physical therapy forward and to promoting the significant role the profession plays globally in improving health and wellbeing. WCPT encourages high standards of physical therapy research, education and practice.

The Panhellenic Physiotherapists' Association has been a member of WCPT since 1974, and WCPT recognises the Association as the sole authoritative voice for the physical therapy profession in Greece. As a member organisation of WCPT, the Panhellenic Physiotherapists' Association has the responsibility to establish standards for the education of physical therapists and standards of practice for physical therapists in Greece. It is the role of the Panhellenic Physiotherapists' Association to ensure that processes are in place to implement and monitor education and practice standards and to ensure that those wishing to practise physical therapy in Greece meet the standard.

WCPT member organizations vote upon international policy at WCPT General Meetings. Member organizations, such as the Panhellenic Physiotherapists' Association, have a responsibility to support, promote and advance the role of physical therapists ensuring that standards are in place to deliver quality service to the public. WCPT member organizations accept WCPT policies and work to achieve the standards of practice and education as described in the WCPT's policies and guidelines.

Physical therapists are qualified to undertake a comprehensive examination/assessment of the patient/client to formulate a diagnosis and prognosis/plan of care, implement a therapeutic intervention/treatment program if appropriate, evaluate the outcome of any intervention/treatment, and determine discharge arrangements. Physical therapy entry-level education should equip physical therapists to be first contact autonomous practitioners, able to assess and treat patients/clients without referral from another medical practitioner or other third party.

WCPT has held discussions with the Panhellenic Physiotherapists' Association to understand education and practice of its members in Greece. We feel that current professional education and practices are consistent with the guidelines of WCPT and the activities of the association are

consistent with those of other WCPT member organisations. Recognising and using the title physical therapist in the Greece is consistent with the international profession represented by WCPT.

The merging of the curriculum in Greece will change this situation.

The two professions of occupational therapy and physical therapy share some common foundation knowledge however, they are fundamentally different professions with different graduate competencies. It is likely that a graduate of this merged course would fail to meet WCPT's description of physical therapist, or the physical therapist heading in the United Nations International Standard Classification of Occupations.

Therefore WCPT strongly requests that the Ministry of Education, Research & Religious Affairs reconsider the decision to merge the School of Occupational Therapy and the School of Physical Therapy

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathon Kruger', written in a cursive style.

Mr Jonathon Kruger
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Panhellenic Physiotherapists' Association