

PSYCHIATRISTS IN MECC MAASTRICHT THROUGH 2019

THE NETHERLANDS PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION (NPA), THE SCIENTIFIC PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PSYCHIATRISTS, HAS ENTERED INTO A LONG-TERM COLLABORATION WITH MECC MAASTRICHT. FROM 2012 TO 2015 THE NPA'S ANNUAL THREE-DAY SPRING CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD IN MECC MAASTRICHT. BOTH PARTIES ADDITIONALLY SIGNED A DECLARATION OF INTENT FOR THE YEARS 2017 TO 2019.

With a history going back 140 years and almost 3,500 members, the NPA is the oldest and largest scientific medical professional association of psychiatrists in the Netherlands. The Association's main aim is to ensure high-quality patient care which can only be achieved if psychiatrists are able to perform their work to a high standard. The NPA therefore invests in acquiring and maintaining scientific knowledge for psychiatrists. The Spring Conference is an important element in this regard. During this conference, the NPA organises an extensive scientific programme, which includes a variety of symposia, courses, workshops, case studies and discussion groups.

The collaboration between the NPA and MECC Maastricht is not a new development. The Association held its Spring Conference at the MECC in 2010. *'With 2,600 attendees, of which around 95% were psychiatrists or psychiatrists in training, the conference was a great success and we more than met the goals we established'*, says NPA Director Peter Niesink. *'Because of this conference's success we have decided to enter into a long-term collaboration with this conference venue in Maastricht as of 2012. This is something unique, because the NPA has never been in a long-term collaboration with any single venue since its establishment.'*

We asked him how important the location is to the conference's success. Niesink's answer is clear. Although the building must be set up to facilitate the conference it is the human factor that makes the difference: *'The staff at MECC are highly attuned to our needs and they can offer us the help and support we require to make the conference a success.'*

Because organisation is not part of our day-to-day jobs, they act as an extra pair of eyes and they advise us when necessary. The MECC staff are professional and friendly facilitators to our event right from the time we start drawing up the agreements for the contract to the last hour of the conference. They quickly find a solution for every challenge that arises, and always pay attention to detail whilst keeping the wishes of our attendees in mind. MECC's partners, such as Maison

van den Boer for catering and Houben for audiovisual support, operate in the same pleasant manner.'

The MECC staff are knowledgeable, customer-friendly and highly valued. Niesink adds: *'I have also found the involvement of MECC management to be something quite unique. Whereas at other venues the management and directors are often nowhere to be found, René Hanssen and Madeleine van der Heijden of MECC Maastricht frequently ask us how things are going and they show true involvement.'*

MECC Maastricht - the name alone confirms the unique cohesion between the venue and its city, which is represented by the Maastricht Convention Bureau. *'The beautiful destination of Maastricht turns out to be something special each time'*, says Niesink. *'It offers the necessary opportunities to unwind in the form of exquisite restaurants, plenty of good hotel rooms as well as its charming character. Attendees often spend several days in Maastricht, also enjoying this aspect of visiting the conference. Thanks to the collaboration between MECC Maastricht and the NPA more than 3,000 national and international guests will stay in the city of Maastricht for three days.'*

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NPA Congress