

## **Between Liberty and Coercion: Large Group Constraints on Individual Freedom**

As psychoanalysts, we are highly individualized. While the consulting room may be filled with the spirits and ghosts of others, past and present, our work is focused on the individual. We tend to be individualistic in our self-image, our clinical and theoretical views, and our conduct. We cherish our personal freedom and resist whatever seems to threaten it.

Yet this may well be an illusion. We live and work in communities, societies and institutions. We are part of unseen large systems that affect us in many ways: socially, legally, politically, economically, culturally and ideologically. These large groups and social systems affect and influence everything we do, even the ways we think and behave. They limit and channel our personal and professional freedom. Some of these influences are unconscious and so much part of us as to be unaware of them. Others are met as surprisingly powerful forces that threaten our freedom and liberty.

This Large Group provides a setting within the scientific activities of the conference to reflect on and explore the ways in which the presence of many others affects us, whether by enriching or by restricting our own identities, and the ways in which threats and opportunities are met. This experience may expand and enhance our participation in the societies and institutions to which we belong.

This Large Group is an opportunity to explore such tensions between individual freedom and large group coercion as they evolve. It will be hosted by three consultants: Shmuel Erlich (Israel Psychoanalytic Society), Mira Erlich-Ginor (Israel Psychoanalytic Society), and Dorothee von Tippelskirch-Eissing (German Psychoanalytic Association).