

International Conference on Environmental Psychology: An IAAP Conference Series

One of the most prominent international conference series in environmental psychology grew from the biennial meetings held by the Environmental Psychology Section of the German Psychological Society (Fachgruppe für Umweltpsychologie in der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Psychologie, DGPs). To open for broader participation and broader dissemination of their research, the members of the Section adopted English as a second official language for their meetings, starting in the early 2000s. This move resulted in so much growth in participation over the subsequent years that the Section finally decided that the series – the Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology (BCEP) – would be more sustainable if managed by a larger international actor. A list of the conferences held is given below.

Around the time of the BCEP held in Magdeburg in 2013, the leadership of the Section turned to the leadership of IAAP Division 4 for support in this regard, as many Division 4 members had come to appreciate the high scientific standard of the BCEP conferences and attended them regularly. Finally, in 2015, representatives from the DGPs and the IAAP prepared and signed a transfer agreement. They included Andrea Abele-Brehm, President of the DGPs; Gundula Hübner, President of the DGPs Environmental Psychology Section; Janel Gauthier, President of the IAAP; and P. Wesley Schultz, President of IAAP Division 4. Linda Steg (Division 4 past-President) and Terry Hartig (Division 4 President-elect) signed the transfer agreement as witnesses. According to the agreement, the series would continue on a biennial basis, with conferences held in odd-numbered years to avoid conflicts with the IAAP congresses. The official language would be English, and the conferences would be held in Europe during at least the subsequent 10 years. The new series took on the name International Conference on Environmental Psychology (ICEP).

The first ICEP held under the auspices of IAAP Division 4 then took place in A Coruña, Spain in 2017, hosted by Ricardo García Mira and Adina Dumitru from the University of A Coruña. The second ICEP took place in Plymouth, UK in 2019, hosted by Sabine Pahl, then at the University of Plymouth, and Mathew White, then at the University of Exeter. Each of these conferences attracted more than 300 participants from more than 30 countries around the world. Although the corona virus pandemic has made planning difficult, the next ICEP is currently scheduled for October, 2021 in Siracusa, Italy, with the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) led by Giuseppe Carrus from Roma Tre University.

As an integral aspect of the ICEP series, the members of the Division 4 Executive Committee (EC) provide support to the respective LOC for the conferences. They also conduct the process through which prospective hosts can bid to organize an ICEP. Further, building on the ideas and experiences from the previous conferences and those in planning, and in keeping with the general environmental values and concerns shared by members of Division 4, the EC views the ICEP as a trial setting for environmentally friendly meeting practices involving both in-real-life and on-line modalities. Thus, the ICEP conference series serves both as a context in which to present new research that addresses pressing environmental issues, and as a source of inspiration and good examples for those who would preserve possibilities for members of the community to meet and learn together in and from real places with a minimum of negative environmental impacts.

The Division 4 EC is mindful of the significance of other conference series within environmental psychology and the broader environment-behavior-design research field. Like the BCEP/ICEP series, some of these conference series represent long traditions in a host country, a region, and a broader international community. For example, the Asociación de Psicología Ambiental (PSICAMB) has held conferences in Spanish and Portuguese cities on a roughly biennial basis since 1986; the International Association for People-Environment Studies (IAPS) maintains a biennial conference series that has met in even-numbered years since 1980; the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA) has met in the Americas almost every year since 1969; and the Swedish Area Group in Environmental Psychology has met every year since 1985. Many members of Division 4 participate in one or more of these conference series, and the respective organizations work to avoid scheduling conflicts and otherwise promote each other's conferences.

Unfortunately, a predatory conference organization, the World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology (WASET), also regularly invites contributions for a periodic "International Conference on Environmental Psychology". The WASET conference series does not appear to have the support of any credible professional organization in the environment-behavior-design research field, and the leadership of Division 4 cannot recommend participation in the WASET conferences.

Conferences held in the development of the ICEP conference series

1. Tagung der Fachgruppe Umweltpsychologie, 5 – 7 September 1995, Salzburg, Austria
2. Tagung der Fachgruppe Umweltpsychologie, 9 – 11 October 1997, Düsseldorf, Germany
3. Tagung der Fachgruppe Umweltpsychologie, 26 – 28 September 1999, Magdeburg, Germany
4. Tagung der Fachgruppe Umweltpsychologie, 20 – 23 September 2001, Kassel, Germany
- 5th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology, 31 August – 3 September 2003, Eindhoven, the Netherlands
- 6th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology, 19 – 21 September 2005, Bochum, Germany
- 7th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology, 9 – 11 September 2007, Bayreuth, Germany
- 8th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology, 6 – 9 September 2009, Zürich, Switzerland
- 9th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology, 26 – 28 September 2011, Eindhoven, the Netherlands
- 10th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology, 22 – 25 September 2013, Magdeburg, Germany
- 11th Biennial Conference on Environmental Psychology, 24 – 26 August 2015, Groningen, the Netherlands
- 1st International Conference on Environmental Psychology, 30 August – 01 September 2017, A Coruña, Spain
- 2nd International Conference on Environmental Psychology, 4 – 6 September 2019, Plymouth, UK