

Systemic Voices for Peace

Within the framework of international collaboration within EFTA and of the co-authors of a common book, Valeria Pomini, Mauro Mariotti and Peter Stratton took the initiative to reflect, as systemic thinkers, on pressing societal issues and crises — through a systemic lens. The group has been called Peace and War, then Systemic voices for peace.

What happens in the world touches us deeply as systemic practitioners — in our hearts, in our conversations, and in our therapy rooms. The complexity we engage with every day in families, couples, teams, and organizations also offers us a valuable ethical compass for relating to the broader challenges of our time.

War, conflict, climate change, migration — these are not isolated events but interwoven phenomena, rooted in history and shaping the future. They influence one another, and they influence our work. Together with a group of engaged systemic thinkers from across the EFTA community and independent from it (a self-organizing system), we entered into dialogue. Through online meetings and the exchange of written reflections, a vibrant, layered, multifaceted conversation emerged. Our inbox has become a rich archive of systemic voices, perspectives, and experiences — calling out for a way to be shared more widely.

Drawing on these reflections, I developed a manifesto: an invitation to continue the dialogue, and a proposal for positioning. Not as a conclusion, but as a comma — an interpunction, a moment to reorient — as we explore how we, as members of EFTA, might relate to what is happening in the world around us.

These themes will also be discussed at the Lyon Congress in some workshops and symposia but especially in the last two hours of the Congress on Saturday the 30th, during the closing up and saying goodbye.

Manifesto for systemic justice, freedom and peace Systemic Voices – A call to thought, presence and action

1. We believe that systemic thinking is not neutral.

It is rooted in relationship, context, power, and meaning. In a world marked by injustice, conflict, and oppression, neutrality cannot be our stance. Silence is not an innocent choice.

2. We acknowledge that the personal is political.

To center certain traumas and ignore others is a political act. Our ethics call on us to make visible what is being erased, and to speak for those being silenced.

3. We reject dichotomous thinking.

The world cannot be divided into 'good' and 'bad', 'us' and 'them'. We choose nuance, in-between space, and the embrace of complexity. But we refuse to use complexity as an excuse for moral inaction.

4. We choose active positioning.

Justice is not an abstract ideal, but a lived practice. Peace is not silence, but the result of courageous and difficult dialogue. Freedom is not individual entitlement, but shared responsibility.

5. We take responsibility for how we act, see, speak, and remain silent.

Systemic practice is more than a method; it is an ethic, a stance, a way of being. It asks us to recognize power, name privilege, and question systems — even when it is uncomfortable.

6. We see healing as relational and political.

Trauma does not arise in a vacuum. Oppression, violence, and loss are embedded in structures. Therapy, care, and systemic practice must include these structures in the field of attention.

7. We stand for multi-vocality, even when it is uncomfortable.

The spaces we work and think in must be safe, but never silent. We listen to brokenness, anger, hope, and fear. We keep the dialogue alive, even — especially — when it is hard.

8. We build spaces of courage, care, and resistance.

In our practice, education, and professional gatherings, we make room for stories that are otherwise left untold. We believe in actions, words, images, movement — in art, ritual, and encounter.

9. We acknowledge that we are part of the system.

Our positions, our silences, our choices — they matter. We commit to continually examining our own place in the web of relationships, histories, and power.

10. We commit to critical awareness and hopeful action.

In times of fascism, dehumanization, and war, we hold onto the idea that every person is a person is a person. We are guided by compassion, context, reflexivity and collective consciousness.

11. We recognize that the many crises we face are not separate — but interconnected.

Political, social, migratory, ecological crises are not isolated problems. They are different faces of a shared underlying rupture: an epistemological crisis that teaches us we are separate — from each other, and from nature. This belief in separation allows us to exploit, dominate, or ignore the world around us as if we were not radically interdependent. To us, war, social injustice, and environmental collapse all emerge from this same root: a breakdown in relationship, in connectedness, in our sense of belonging to each other and to the earth. A systemic ethics calls us to heal these ruptures at every level — personal, collective, planetary.

We consider this manifesto not as a final truth, but as an invitation.

To reflect. To connect. To practice justice and kindness in every relationship.

To hold peace with the complexity it requires.

This is not an end, but a beginning: a systemic voice in a world that urgently needs nuance, courage, and humanity.

Cinthe Lemmens