

In memoriam Dr. Fabienne Maron



Dear colleagues and friends,

It is with an indescribable sorrow, in a period of Season's Greetings when we were about to prepare and send to you our usual message of best wishes for the New Year, that I have the terrible duty to inform our EGPA family, and the whole IIAS community, of the unbelievable: our esteemed and beloved friend, Dr. Fabienne Maron,

the heart and soul of EGPA and a main pillar of IIAS, in her double capacity as EGPA Executive Secretary and IIAS Scientific Director in charge of scientific activities, suddenly passed away, on December 30th, 2024.

Fabienne's unexpected death, at such an early age, is a terrible shock for her close friends and colleagues. We know it will be deeply resented throughout our community, in all countries and on all continents. The circumstances of her death make it ever more shocking: our friend Fabienne was on sick leave since a few weeks, due to a combination of general weakness and several viral attacks, none of them lethal *per se*, so she was treated by her physician at home, without hospitalisation. Geert Bouckaert and I, we had very frequent conversations with her, either directly on the phone or by text messages. The unusual fact that Fabienne did not reply to our Happy New Year messages yesterday, and that neither of us could reach her on the phone, despite repeated calls, gave us cause for concern, and we decided that Geert would ask the Louvain-la-Neuve police to visit her apartment. The visit was done today, and the police found Fabienne dead. The terrible paradox – Fabienne was known worldwide by thousands of scholars, young researchers and delegates to our conferences who experi-

enced her kind attention to all, but she died alone behind the closed door of her apartment, at a time of celebrations around – should be meditated: it tells a lot about affective loneliness in our societies...

Our dear Fabienne's decease is a terrible loss for our PA community, that she served with constant dedication for almost a quarter of a century (April 2000 was her starting time with IIAS and EGPA). The many messages that we receive today are unanimous in praising her complete loyalty to IIAS and EGPA, her great commitment to her so various tasks, her great sense of professionalism and her search for excellence in the organizing of conferences (to the latest details), all combined with her immense kindness to people, and even her true generosity towards collaborators and youngsters (volunteers, interns, students, young researchers entering our networks). Those of us who have had the chance to work closely with her – as it is my case for a decade or so – can also testify that Fabienne had a remarkable capacity to adapt to circumstances and to manage (small or bigger) crises in real time, without uselessly stressing other persons, and thanks to her true sense of humour. As for the ones who had the privilege to be her friends, the loss is so immense that words fail to describe it!

For the sake of justice, I would like to also emphasise that, much more than being only such a kind, lovely and too modest organiser/manager, Dr Fabienne Maron, who took her PhD from UC Louvain in 1999 and remained enrolled as a researcher at her Alma Mater for many years, was a permanent guest lecturer in the MA programmes of the Faculty of Law and Political Science at Reims Champagne-Ardenne University (France) for 25 years, a guest speaker at the Master in Public Management and Policy at the University of Italian Switzerland, Lugano since 2019, a lecturer in the MPM project in Bahrain for five years, a member of MethodsNet, a researcher who published articles at scientific journals and chapters in edited volumes, on research topics such as public governance, project management, transparency and European policies. Fabienne co-edited with Paul Joyce and P.S. Reddy the big volume on the COVID-19 crisis management, *Good Public Governance in A Global Pandemic* (2020). Fabienne, as a true scholar, also took a very active part and gave often decisive inputs in the intellectual conception of the topics, scientific programmes, calls-for-proposals, plenary sessions, thematic panels, of our EGPA conferences and our “dialogues” with our sister organizations (TAD, TED, Euromena).

Having done all that, and much more, Fabienne had progressively become the intellectual and institutional “memory” of our community in constant

evolution. Taking inspiration from Japan, a country of high culture which wisely awards the status of “national living treasure” to a few talented and long-lasting artists and/or artisans, I argued with humour and tenderness, in a support letter I wrote, a couple of years ago, to recommend her for the IASIA Donald C. Stone Award 2022, that Fabienne, even if a bit too young, was already a sort of international PA community “living treasure”. Fabienne went away far too early. The treasure remains. We will cherish it. Your devoted,

The EGPA President, on behalf of the Steering Committee

Jean-Michel EYMERI-DOUZANS

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eyméri-Douzans", with a long horizontal flourish underneath.