Towards Unification of European Neurology?

Most neurologists in Europe know we have two organisations, the European Neurological Society (ENS) and the European Federation of Neurological Societies (EFNS). While the ENS concentrates on organising annual congresses and teaching courses the EFNS has a much broader scope, and in addition to annual congresses and teaching courses has many committees, task forces and a fully owned scientific journal, and actively lobbies on behalf of neurology at the European level.

Neurology is a small and fragile specialty, but at the same time one with extraordinary progress in science and therapeutic possibilities. For such a specialty it seems counterproductive to split resources, and the existence of two annual neurological congresses in Europe has repeatedly been criticised. Many attempts have been made in the past to co-ordinate congresses, but all have been unsuccessful.

The EFNS has always been leading in efforts to co-ordinate, and we now appreciate that in the recent ENS newsletter there is a very important statement signed by the entire Executive Committee of the ENS. It announces a willingness to seek a solution to the division of neurology in Europe. We in the EFNS have always had views similar to those now put forward by the ENS Executive Committee and we are therefore very pleased by the statement.

With talks possibly starting in the near future it seems worthwhile to consider what their goal should be. During negotiations in the past, the two organisations have tried to secure the best possible position for themselves in the future. However, a better approach to use in the future would be to focus on the needs of neurology in Europe which, ultimately, is also what would benefit patients with nervous system disorders the most. Here are a few important points, but the list could be much longer: one, and only one, big congress with associated teaching courses per year; additional teaching courses outside of congresses; educational policies in cooperation with the European Board of Neurology; one strong, fully owned scientific journal; one administrative office to co-ordinate initiatives throughout the year; and exchange and bursary programs for young doctors. There is also a strong need to support our specialty by lobbying at European as well as national levels. Diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of patients with nervous system disorders have improved enormously, but our specialty is not granted the resources necessary to deliver these services to all patients. Other specialties are suddenly very interested in stroke, dementia, headache and other neurological diseases. Only a strong neurological organisation can ensure that all the neurological patients are actually cared for by neurologists and by other specialists who are willing to co-operate.

These considerations lead to the conclusion that coordination of meetings is no longer a sufficient goal. We have to create a completely new organisation into which the two existing organisations can be fused. In creating such an organisation we have to forget all old disputes, we have to forget the interests of the existing organisations and we have to forget about personalities and positions. It is a formidable task, and it may not be possible to accomplish it. But if we are unsuccessful, neurology will lose in the competition with other larger and better organised specialties. Therefore, we must not give up before we have tried our very best.

If the Executive Committee of the ENS agrees to a significant part of the above views, we hope to receive an official invitation to start negotiations.

Jes Olesen
President of the EFNS
Bursaries for Young Neurologists

The EFNS offers 50 bursaries of DM 1000 to European neurologists under the age of 35 who are not yet in a permanent position and whose abstract is accepted for oral or poster presentation. The selection is made on the basis of the grading given by the Congress Programme Committee. Application forms for bursaries will be mailed to all those whose abstract has been accepted.

Workshop of the European Epilepsy Academy (EUREPA)

The EFNS Congress in Copenhagen hosts a workshop organised by EUREPA, during which epilepsy specialists will discuss various etiologies of epilepsy including hippocampal sclerosis and general medical conditions. Organisers of the session are Professor Herman Stefan, Erlangen, Germany, chairman of the EFNS Scientist Panel on Epilepsy and Professor Peter Wolf, Bielefeld, International League against Epilepsy.

European Stroke Initiative (EUSI) Symposium

The EUSI recommendations for stroke management will be presented at a special symposium during the EFNS Congress in Copenhagen. Topics include the organisation of modern stroke care, risk factors and primary prevention, and acute stroke care, as well as rehabilitation and secondary prevention.

Teaching Course for Young Neurologists in Tirgu Mures, Rumania

The EFNS supports a teaching course for young neurologists from Rumania, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Moldavia, to be held on 28–30 May 2000 in Tirgu Mures, a university town in Rumania, which is easily accessible from the neighbouring countries. Professor László Csiba, head of the neurological department of the University of Debrecen, Hungary, is in charge of the organisation, and his department will supply educational facilities for the course. Lecture halls and on-site facilities will be provided by the Medical Faculty of the University of Tirgu Mures. Many prominent neurologists, including the President of the World Federation of Neurology Professor James Toole, have kindly agreed to lecture at the course without any remuneration. The emphasis of the course will be on recent diagnostic and therapeutical advances in epilepsy, headache, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease and stroke, as well as on rehabilitation in neurology. One afternoon will be dedicated to neurosonology.

If you would like to receive further information please contact:

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In November 1997 the EFNS established a Task Force (TF) to produce a report on the state of presurgical evaluation for epilepsy surgery across Europe and to recommend standards. The TF, chaired by Professor Hermann Stefan, Erlangen, Germany, has now completed the report which will be published in Volume 7, Issue 1, of the European Journal of Neurology. With progress in diagnostic techniques and surgical procedures, more and more patients with pharmacoresistant epilepsies may profit from epilepsy surgery. The guideline paper helps to identify such patients by formulating minimal standards for presurgical evaluation.

The EFNS Task Force on diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer’s disease and other disorders associated with dementia, chaired by Professor Gunhild Waldemar, Copenhagen, Denmark, recommends that neurologists should have a clear role in the management of dementia in the whole of Europe. In some countries, neurologists have already taken the lead in the management of patients with dementia, while in others the neurologist is rarely involved. A review of available evidence-based guidelines on dementia clearly demonstrates the important role of the neurologist in establishing the differential diagnosis of rare and common brain disorders causing cognitive and behavioral symptoms, and in evaluating pharmacological treatment and certain complications in patients with dementia. The guideline paper will be printed in Volume 7, Issue 2, of the European Journal of Neurology.

WHO plan of work in the field of neurology

The 12th meeting of non-governmental organisations concerned with the prevention and treatment of neurological disorders took place on 13 December 1999 at the WHO headquarters in Geneva. Representatives of a large number of scientific organisations and patient advocacy groups, among them Dr Jean-Marc Léger on behalf of the EFNS, participated in the meeting.

Dr Prilipko, Co-ordinator for Neuroscience and Neurological Disorders, WHO, outlined a plan of work for the period 2000–2001, which includes the following activities:

- Global campaign against epilepsy
- Development of normative and educational materials on Parkinson’s disease
- Production of an educational kit on dementia for primary health care workers
- Publication of the booklet ‘Fundamental Facts in Neurology’
- Support to people disabled by dementia and multiple sclerosis
- Project on indicators for high-risk groups on dementia
- WHO/NINDS fellowship programme

The WHO will devote the 2001 World Health Day and the World Health Report to neurological and mental disorders, and it was proposed that a small steering group be formed, chaired by Mrs Mary Baker, European Parkinson’s Disease Association, to assist Dr Prilipko in the activities on neurological disorders. The group should include representatives of the WFN and the EFNS as well as lay organisations. Mrs Evelyn Sipido, EFNS Branch Office in Florence, volunteered to provide the necessary administrative support.

Calendar of Events

2000

52nd Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Neurology
29 April-5 May 2000, San Diego, CA, USA
Information: American Academy of Neurology, 1080 Montreal Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55116-2325, USA
Tel: +1 651 695 1940, fax: +1 651 695 2791

6th International Conference on Clinical Neuropsychology
17-21 May 2000, Opatija, Croatia
Information: Professor Dr Leontino Battistin, Department of Neurosciences, University of Padua, Via Giustiniani 5, I-35128 Padova, Italy
Tel: +39 40 877 1700, e-mail: ecnlp@neta.it

5th Meeting of the European Society for Clinical Neuropharmacology
11-15 June 2000, Barcelona, Spain
Information: MDS 2000, c/o AKM Congress Service, PO Box, CH-4005 Basel, Switzerland
Tel: +41 61 686 77 11; fax: +41 61 686 77 88; e-mail: unite.enmg@hcuge.ch or michel.magistris@hcuge.ch
http://www.medecine.unige.ch/enmg

6th International Congress of Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Disorders
11-15 June 2000, Barcelona, Spain
Information: MDS 2000, c/o AKM Congress Service, PO Box, CH-4005 Basel, Switzerland
Tel: +41 61 686 77 11; fax: +41 61 686 77 88; e-mail: info@akm.ch

Symposium ‘Genetics of Movement Disorders: Gateways and Perspective’
Satellite Symposium of the 6th International Congress of Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Disorders
24-26 May 2000, Geneva, Switzerland
Information: Secretariat ENMG 2000, Clinique de Neurologie, Hôpital Cantonal Universitaire, CH-1211 Genève 14, Suisse
Tel: +41 22 37 28 348, fax: +41 22 37 28 350; e-mail: unite.enmg@hcuge.ch or michel.magistris@hcuge.ch

IXth European Stroke Conference
24-27 May 2000, Vienna, Austria
Information: ICOS Congress Organisation Service GmbH, Johannesgasse 14, A-1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel: +43 1 512 80 91; fax: +43 1 512 80 91 80; e-mail: fraundorfer@icos.co.at
ENMG 2000-XIIes Journées francophones d’électroneuromyographie
24-26 May 2000, Geneva, Switzerland
Information: Secrétariat ENMG 2000, Clinique de Neurologie, Hôpital Cantonal Universitaire, CH-1211 Genève 14, Suisse
Tel: +4122 37 28 348; fax: +4122 37 28 350; e-mail: unite.enmg@hcuge.ch or michel.magistris@hcuge.ch
http://www.medecine.unige.ch/enmg

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