Unification of European neurology – a missed opportunity

Neurologists in Europe are organized in two societies which have quite a different profile: The European Neurological Society (ENS) is a body of individual members and concentrates on organizing annual congresses and teaching courses. The European Federation of Neurological Societies (EFNS) is based on national societies and therefore all members of national neurological societies are per definition members of the EFNS. In this position, EFNS officially represents the World Federation of Neurology (WFN) in Europe. According to its constitution, EFNS is governed by a council of delegates and its purpose is to advance the development of neurological sciences in a broader approach, not only organizing annual congresses and teaching courses, but also developing European programmes of clinical and experimental neurological research and teaching and promoting international co-operation and exchange arrangements for clinical neurologists as well as neuroscientists. To pursue these objectives in addition to the annual congresses and teaching courses, the EFNS has many scientist panels, task forces and committees, runs its own scientific journal, actively lobbies on behalf of neurology at the European level and co-operates closely with or is part of other European societies, such as the European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA) and the European Brain Council (EBC).

Despite these differences in the organizational structure and the objectives of EFNS and ENS, there have been considerable efforts to promote co-operation between the two societies, potentially to achieve a merger or at least to organize the annual meetings in a joint or alternating manner. Both sides have expressed the need of such a co-operation and of activities to promote it (EFNS Newsletters 1994, 1996, 2000, ENS Newsletter 1999). A committee consisting of representatives from EFNS and ENS was formed whose task it was to analyse the requirements for creating one new society comprising all neurologists in Europe. This committee met in Milan in December 2000 and in London in June 2001. It became clear in the discussions that a merger of the two societies would not be feasible in the near future, as the differences in the organizational structure are too substantial to be overcome in the present situation, and the societies would loose too much of their individual identity.

The organization of European neurological congresses is the area in which the interests of the EFNS and ENS overlap primarily. One annual European Congress of Neurology would certainly strengthen the position of neurology in Europe and all neurologists would appreciate to have one strong forum. The EFNS–ENS negotiating committee discussed the chances of holding a European Congress of Neurology jointly organized by the EFNS and ENS. Various steps would have to be taken in advance of a joint meeting, including the election of a joint scientific board with representatives from each society, choice of an appropriate venue, appointment of a contractor in response to a formal bid, election of a congress president, and agreement on financial matters such as distribution of surplus and reimbursements of invited speakers and officers. Whereas the Management Committee of the EFNS came to the conclusion that these problems are solvable, the Executive Board of the ENS expressed the view that without a merger on the horizon it was also not constructive to plan a joint meeting at this stage and voted against having a joint meeting in 2006.

This development is certainly disappointing to neurologists in Europe looking forward to one European meeting. However, both, ENS and EFNS, have decided to continue discussions on activities of mutual interest leading to a close collaboration between the two societies. In this context, it must be stressed that de facto a collaboration has existed over the years: all ENS members who are members of their national societies are automatically also members of the EFNS; members of either society are represented on scientific committees of the other society and have participated in the congresses of the other group. In the future, this reciprocal representation should be intensified – and a step in this direction is the nomination of prominent representatives of ENS as convenors for main themes in upcoming EFNS congresses. The joint EFNS–ENS negotiating committee will continue its discussions in a congenial style to further develop the co-operation and co-ordination of activities and congresses. Hopefully, these continued activities will finally lead to a formal collaboration – and even to one European Society jointly advancing clinical neurology and neurosciences.

Wolf-Dieter Heiss
President of the EFNS

New EFNS Head Office

Many of you will recently have received a little note saying ‘We have moved’ and giving the new EFNS address
EFNS Head Office, University Campus, Alser Strasse 4, A-1090 Vienna, Austria,
Tel.: +43 1 889 05 03; Fax: +43 1 889 05 03 13
For more than a decade Prof. Gernot Schnaberth had hosted the EFNS headquarters at the Neurological Hospital Rosenhügel, of which he is medical director. When the EFNS was founded in 1991, there was very little money and hardly any administrative infrastructure, only the enthusiasm of some dedicated neurologists who were convinced that their speciality would benefit from a federation uniting all European neurologists. But an organization cannot live on ideas and ideals alone, it also needs an office, and very generously Prof. Schnaberth gave the EFNS permission to use a large room in one of the hospital buildings completely free of charge. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for this valuable assistance in the difficult start-up phase and for the hospitality which provided the basis on which the EFNS could safely develop.

Now that the EFNS has become a strong and healthy organization, it needs more office space for its numerous activities ranging from the organization of congresses and teaching courses, publication of a journal and a newsletter, producing guidelines, initiating research programmes, collaborating with scientific and lay organizations to running and supporting exchange programmes. Thus, the Management Committee decided to rent office space at the Vienna University Campus located in the former administrative building of the old Vienna General Hospital. We are on very historic grounds here. The 300-year-old
CME online – European Journal of Neurology

A new milestone in CME

Very shortly after the decision to introduce CME online as a new initiative for the readers of the European Journal of Neurology, the EFNS has put this plan into action. From now on, one article per issue will be designated a CME article. The questions will not be published in the printed journal, but the web address of the CME site will be given.

Why was this important step necessary? We have learned a lot about CME in the past years, and by now, most European countries consider CME a necessary or even compulsory measure. It is indeed one of the most important obligations of the physician to stay within the mainstream of knowledge and constantly improve his/her knowledge and skills. So far, most of CME was based on the traditional CME of 'life performances', usually by attending a meeting or a congress. As you know, the EFNS has also set up a CME Sub-Committee, which has elaborated guidelines for good quality CME meetings. This will continue to be the main educational activity. However, in recent years the EFNS and the UEMS (Continuing Medical Education Guidelines of the European Federation of Neurological Societies – Education Committee – EFNS/Union Européenne des Médecins Spécialistes Neurology Section – UEMS, Eur J Neurol 1999, 6: 267–271) have recommended that also other approaches towards CME, such as reading articles, preparing papers and attendance of local educational activities arranged by national societies should be promoted.

Many discussions were held about self-studies, such as reading articles, suggesting that the self-responsible physician could not be controlled, whether he studied the paper properly or not. However, how can you control in an audience, whether someone's attention is focused on the subject? Reading is a traditional way of acquiring knowledge, and our journal, the European Journal of Neurology, will offer a wide range of interesting CME articles focusing on new developments. These articles are carefully selected and the online reader can, after having studied the article, go for the multiple-choice test. He/she has to be precise though, as giving the wrong answer will reject further attempts for the same question; which may seem harsh, but is necessary to keep up the spirit of the idea.

The CME website will be set up within the journal homepage, and each new article will be loaded onto the CME site when the relevant journal issue is published. By answering the questions electronically, a report will be generated to create a certificate for emailing to those colleagues who passed the CME test. It is recommended that the certificate be submitted to the national society/national CME body in charge, who can grant the credits, as recommended by the EFNS.

Jointly with Pippa Smart, Journal Publishing Manager Blackwell Publishing, who has given us many ideas for our CME pages, we have developed this new initiative, and we cordially invite you: GET YOUR CME CREDITS ONLINE, WITH THE EJN.

6th Congress of the European Federation of Neurological Societies

26–29 October 2002, Vienna, Austria

Information:
Mrs Elisabeth Rihur-Maurer,
Wiener Medizinische Akademie,
Alserstrasse 4, A-1090 Vienna,
Tel.: +43 1405 138312; Fax: +43 1407 8274
E-mail: efns2002@medacad.org; Website: www.efns.org/efns2002

News Items

Quiz on the congress website

The first round of the congress quiz has been completed. Only two participants had all 20 answers correct and won a free registration to the 6th EFNS Congress. Seven participants submitted 19 correct answers. According to the quiz rules, the name of the third winner was drawn by lot. We cordially congratulate the following winners:
Yuri Aleksienko, Vitebsk, Belarus
David Chkhartishvili, Tbilisi, Georgia
Liliana Luhtimovschi, Chisinau, Moldova

Abstracts

We hope that by the time you read this newsletter you have already submitted your abstract for the 6th EFNS Congress. The abstract deadline is April 15, 2002! The Congress Programme Committee will meet at the end of May to select oral presentations and posters and all submitters will receive information about the fate of their abstract in time to register before the cut-off date for early registration fee (June 30).

Bursaries

If you are a neurologist under the age of 35 and your abstract has been accepted, you may apply for a bursary consisting of free registration to the congress and four nights hotel accommodation at a three star hotel. Application forms for bursaries will be mailed together with the letter informing of acceptance of abstracts. Should you not fall into this age group, you can still try to win a free registration as a prize of the congress quiz on the congress homepage www.efns.org/efns2002.

Oral presentations

When preparing your presentation please do not forget that there will be no possibility to show slides. Facilities for computerized projection will be available for all oral congress sessions. Video projection (European VHS/PAL system, low band) and overhead projection will be provided if ordered by September 25, 2002.

Opening ceremony

Be sure to arrive in Vienna in time to attend the opening of the congress at the Vienna Konzerthaus on Saturday, October 26, at 19.00 hours. The recently completely renovated building will provide the right atmosphere for a special evening featuring a lecture by Prof. Semir Zeki of London on ‘Vision, arts and the brain’ and a concert rounded off by delicacies and drinks.

Gala evening

Lundbeck A/S invites all congress participants to a Viennese ball in the magnificent setting of the Vienna City Hall on Sunday, October 27. Bring your dancing shoes and high spirits! We will provide the music and food and wine to keep you going.

History of neurology

After having danced the night through you can start Monday morning with a bus tour arranged by the EFNS Scientist Panel on History of Neurology which will take you to Viennese sites that are of medico-historical interest, including the famous Museum of History of Medicine. A workshop in the congress centre will complete the programme. If you want to make a contribution to this workshop, please contact the panel chair Dr Christopher Gardner-Thorpe at cgardnerthorpe@doctors.org.uk.

European Journal of Neurology (EJN)

All active participants of the EFNS Congress in Copenhagen currently receive a free subscription of the EJN until the end of 2002. The Management Committee has decided to continue this practice, which means that all speakers and presenters of posters at the Vienna Congress will get a free paper subscription of the journal for the year 2003. But all members of European national neurological societies can read the EJN online free of charge from June 2002 onwards. If you are interested, contact your national society to get your access token.
Every spring a group of young neurologists and trainees are guests of the EFNS at a 4-day workshop and teaching course with the aim of providing an educational programme in selected important fields of neurology, discussing the situation of neurology in the countries in transition and devising programmes for personal communication between Western and Eastern neurological departments.

In the beginning the young guests came predominantly from the former communist countries; however, it soon became clear that the workshop should be a forum where young colleagues from East and West can meet, exchange experience and learn from each other. Therefore, each year the number of participating countries is increased and will soon include all of Europe.

The EFNS Teaching Course and European Co-operation committees, which are responsible for the programme, work on a long-term plan which will ensure that over the years all important areas of neurology will be covered by courses. Workshop participants are not confined to listening but have to prepare contributions of their own. Group work is encouraged and discussions with the lecturers will consolidate the knowledge gained during the courses.

The castles of Trest, the location of previous workshops, has become too small for our purposes and this year’s Academy will take place during May 2–7 at Stare Splavy in northern Bohemia. The topics of the educational programme are polyneuropathy, multiple sclerosis and neuroradiology. Course participants will report on how these neurological diseases are managed in their everyday practice, how the availability of equipment influences diagnosis and treatment and how health insurance systems are involved in the practice.

If you would like to be invited to the EFNS Academy for Young Neurologists and Trainees in 2003, please send your application together with a curriculum vitae and a list of publications to EFNS Branch Office Prague, Ing. Magda Dohnalová, Department of Neurology, Faculty Hospital, Královské Vinohrady, Srobarova 50, CZ-100 34 Prague, Czech Republic, Tel./Fax: +420 26716 3563, E-mail: efns@fnkv.cz

The EFNS Academy for Young Neurologists and Trainees

The Year in Neurology 2001

Massimo Feliciani, Thomas Warner, Niall Quinn, Anette Schrag, Matthew Walker, Simon Lovestone, Massimo Feliciani, Thomas Warner, Niall Quinn, Anette Schrag, Matthew Walker, Simon Lovestone


Neurology is a rapidly developing field of clinical medicine, with a wealth of recent achievements in diagnosis and therapy providing a plethora of new knowledge, particularly in the areas of neuroimaging, neurogenetics, and basic neurosciences. The increasing knowledge, particularly in the areas of neuroimaging, diagnosis and therapy providing a plethora of new medicine, with a wealth of recent achievements in neurology will be continued in the future.

The book is divided into five parts covering areas of major interest in which there has been much recent progress, i.e. dystonia, Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s disease, epilepsy and multiple sclerosis. All 27 chapters are well organized, with an introduction, brief critical comments and statements to each referred paper, a final comment, and a selected list of references. The majority of the reviewed papers have been chosen according to their contents and results, although the impact is more on clinically relevant studies than on basic neurosciences, and some specialists may miss one or the other outstanding paper published during the period covered by the review – a bias of subjective choice by the editorial committee. An index of the papers reviewed and a list of abbreviations as well as a general index are found at the end of the book, which certainly will provide the reader with a concise, focused resource of recent developments in the field of clinical neurosciences. It is hoped that this type of concise and critical reviews on recent progress in neurology will be continued in the future.

K.A. Jellinger
Vienna, Austria

EFNS members may order The Year in Neurology 2001 at 10% discount.

Orders with credit card details should be sent to: Clinical Publishing Services Ltd, Oxford Centre for Innovation, Mill Street, Oxford OX2 0XZ, UK
Tel.: +44 1865 811116; fax: +44 1865 251550; e-mail: gresford@compuserve.com

Calendar of Events

2002

1st Mediterranean Congress of Neurology
Approved for CME by the EFNS
April 26–28, 2002, Limassol, Cyprus
Information: Congresswise Ltd, PO Box 57468, 3022 Limassol, Cyprus
Tel.: +357 574 9919; Fax: +357 574 9744

EFNS Academy for Young Neurologists and Trainees
May 2–7, 2002, Stare Splatvy, Czech Republic
Information: Prof. Dr Pavel Kalvach, EFNS Branch Office Prague, Department of Neurology, Srobarova 50, CZ-100 34 Praha 10, Czech Republic
Tel.: +420 267 162814; fax: +420 267 162377; e-mail: efns@fnkv.cz

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INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP PARKINSONISM AND DEMENTIA: SYNUCLEINOPATHIES, TAUOPATHIES AND BEYOND
May 9–11, Istanbul, Turkey
Information: Viza Tourist, Tel.: +90-212-2939308; fax: +90-212-244123; e-mail: events@vistatourism.com

6TH CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR CLINICAL NEUROPHARMACOLOGY (ECSNP)
May 14–18, 2002, Budapest, Hungary
Information: MOTESZ, 6th ECSNP Congress Office, PO Box 145, H-1443 Budapest, Hungary
Tel.: +36 1311 6668; fax: +36 1383 7918; e-mail: motesz@elender.hu

7TH MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY OF NEUROSONOLOGY AND CEREBRAL HAEMODYNAMICS
May 26–28, 2002, Bern, Switzerland
Information: Tamara Roten, Congress Secretariat, Janssen-Cilag AG, Silhbriggeistrasse 111, CH-6341 Baar, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 41767 3449; fax: +41 41767 3400; e-mail: roten@jaceh.jnj.com; website: www.janssen-cilag.ch

33RD SCANDINAVIAN NEUROLOGY CONGRESS
May 29–June 2, Reykjavik, Iceland
Information: Congress Reykjavik, Engjateig 5, 15–10 Reykjavik, Iceland
Tel.: +354 5853900; fax: +354 5853901; e-mail: congress@congress.is; website: www.neurocongress.is

11TH EUROPEAN STROKE CONFERENCE
May 29–June 1, 2002, Geneva, Switzerland
Information: www.eurostroke.org

10TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MYASTHENIA GRAVIS AND RELATED DISORDERS
May 29–June 1, 2002, Key Biscayne, Florida, USA
Information: New York Academy of Sciences, Science and Technology Meetings Department, 2 East 63rd Street, New York, NY 10021
Tel.: +1 212 838 0230; fax: +1 212 838 5640; e-mail: conference@nyas.org; http://www.nyas.org

EPDA 10TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY
May 31–June 2, 2002, Slovenia
Information: Lizzie Grieve, Projects Development Manager and EPDA Liaison, 4 Golding Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3NJ, UK
Tel./Fax: +44 1732 457683; e-mail: lizzie@epda.demon.co.uk

SECOND INTERNATIONAL MS Week
Joint Meeting of the Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers, IOMSN, LACTRIMS and RIMS, June 5–9, 2002, Boston, USA
Information: Tina Trott, Executive Assistant, Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers, Tel.: +1 201 837-0727, ext. 120; fax: +1 201 837-9414; e-mail: flaptour@6thehf.org; website: www.6thehf.org

ENS 2002
June 22–26, 2002, Berlin, Germany
Information: ENS 2002 c/o AKM Congress Service, Clarastrasse 57, 5th Floor, 80138 Munich, Germany
Tel.: +44 20 7837 3611 4152; fax: +44 20 7813 6505; e-mail: headoffice@efns.org

12TH WORLD CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR BRAIN ELECTROMAGNETIC TOPOGRAPHY (ISBET)
October 27–29, 2002, Naples, Italy
Information: Dr Umberto Volpe, ISBET 2002 Organizing Committee, Department of Psychiatry, University of Naples, SUN Largo Madonna delle Grazie, 80138 Naples, Italy
Tel.: +39 0815666512; fax: +39 0815666523; e-mail: umberto.volpe@libero.it; website: www.isb2002.it

15th ECNP Congress
October 5–9, 2002, Barcelona, Spain
Information: Congres Holland BV, PO Box 302, NL-1000 AH Amsterdam, Netherlands
Tel.: +31 20 4020 020; fax: +31 20 4022 225; e-mail: secretariat@ecnp.nl; website: www.ecnp.nl

5TH EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON EPILEPTOLOGY
October 6–10, 2002, Madrid, Spain
Information: 5th European Congress on Epileptology, 253 Crumlin Road, Dublin 12, Ireland
Homepage: www.epilepsymadrid2002.org

6th Congress of the European Federation of Neurological Societies
October 26–29, 2002, Vienna, Austria
Information: EFNS Head Office, University Campus, A-1090 Wien
Tel.: +43 1 889 0503; fax: +43 1 889 05013; e-mail: headoffice@efns.org

XTH WORLD CONGRESS ON PSYCHIATRIC GENETICS
October 8–12, 2002, Brussels, Belgium
Information: ICEQD, Organizing Secretariat, 122 Avenue de l’Atlantique, B-1150 Brussels, Belgium
Tel.: +32 2779 9599; fax: +32 2779 9660; e-mail: wcpg2002@iceo.be

MOVEMENT DISORDERS
November 2–7, 2002, Orlando, Florida, USA
Information: Society for Neuroscience, 11 Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 500, Washington DC 20036, USA
Tel.: +1202 462-6688; fax: +1202 462-9740; e-mail: info@sfn.org

12ND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR NEUROSCIENCE
November 2–7, 2002, Orlando, Florida, USA
Information: Society for Neuroscience, 11 Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 500, Washington DC 20036, USA
Tel.: +1202 462-6688; fax: +1202 462-9740; e-mail: info@sin.org

7TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARKINSONS DISEASE AND MOVEMENT DISORDERS
approved for CME by the EFNS
November 10–14, 2002, Miami, FL, USA
Information: The Movement Disorder Society, 611 East Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202, USA
Tel.: +1 414 2762145; fax: +1 414 2762146; e-mail: info@movementdisorders.org; homepage: www.movementdisorders.org

13TH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON ALS/MND
November 17–19, 2002, Melbourne, Australia
Information: Karen Walker, MND Association, PO Box 246, Northampton, NN1 2PR, UK
Tel.: +44 1604 240505; fax: +44 1604 638328; e-mail: symposium@mmndassociation.org; website: www.mmndassociation.org

Future EFNS Congresses
Vienna, October 26–29, 2002
Helsinki, August 30–September 2, 2003
Paris, September 4–7, 2004
Athens, September 17–21, 2005
Glasgow, September 1–6, 2006