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Creation of the European Academy of Neurology

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CREATION OF THE EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF NEUROLOGY

For many years people have asked why we have 2 annual European neurology congresses. The answer lies in history, although we have now agreed to hold only one each year.

The European Neurological Society (ENS) (www.ens.org) was founded in 1986 by a group of neurologists who understood that Europe would become a major scene of clinical and academic neurology and that a European society of neurology could serve to promote the excellence of our work. The ENS was modeled after the American Academy of Neurology; teaching courses played a prominent role in annual meetings, in addition to general symposia and platform and poster presentations. The ENS model represented a deliberate break from national representation to individual membership, expressing the enthusiasm of individuals in clinical and experimental neurology and emphasizing individual expertise in neurologic specialties.

The original goals have been met, thanks to the personal dedication of a few people from the initiation of the ENS: Professor Gérard Said, France (who was the secretary of the ENS for 20 years), the late Professors Anita Harding and P.K. Thomas, UK, Professor K. Toyka, Germany, and Professor A. Steck, Switzerland (the long-time treasurer). Starting with its first congress in Nice in 1986, the ENS has run successful annual congresses without intermission, the 21st being in Lisbon in 2011, with the next in Prague on June 9–12, 2012 (www.congrex.ch/ens2012). The ENS business has been governed by a president, secretary-general, treasurer, and executive committee elected at its annual general assembly and more recently by 20 specialty subcommittees who propose educational courses, workshops, and topics for symposia. The ENS chose as its official journal the longstanding *Journal of Neurology*.

The first glimmers of the European Federation of Neurological Societies (EFNS) (www.efns.org) appeared in 1986 at the Danube-Neurology Congress, where Professor Mieczyslaw Wender, Poland, pro-

posed a unified European neurologic society. In 1989, Professor Daniel Bartko, President of the then Czech-Slovakian Neurological Society, organized a Pan-European congress for neurology. In 1991, a second Pan-European congress for neurology was held in Vienna under the presidency of Professor Franz Gerstenbrand. At that congress, with the encouragement of Professor John Walton, now Lord Walton, the Federation of European Neurological Societies was founded with Professor Gerstenbrand as its first president and a council of delegates consisting of representatives from each national European society. The EFNS is currently governed by a council of 44 national delegates who elect a management committee of 11 individuals supported by a head office in Vienna. The EFNS publishes its own journal, the *European Journal of Neurology*, founded in 1995. It provides an extensive portfolio of educational courses in Eastern Europe and also in Africa. It has created an on-line library of guidelines that are published in its journal and available on its Web site; they are regularly updated and made available to its members and to the poorest countries through HINARI (Access to Research in Health Programme). HINARI is a program sponsored by the World Health Organization that provides free or low-cost Internet access to leading medical and scientific journals and books to local, nonprofit institutions in developing countries (www.who.int/hinari/en/).

The EFNS makes political representations on behalf of its members and is a constituent member of the European Brain Council, which has successfully lobbied the European parliament for a major increase in annual funding for neurologic research. The EFNS, now in its 20th year, held its 15th congress in Budapest in 2011 and will hold its next in Stockholm on September 8–11, 2012 (<http://efns2012.efns.org/>).

With common goals and means, it slowly became clear that the ENS and the EFNS had to collaborate. The first actual collaboration came from an initiative of Professor Grisold as president of the European

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Figure 1 Professor Jacques de Reuck (European Federation of Neurological Societies) exchanges ties with Professor José Ferro (European Neurological Society), Florence 2009



Board of Neurology (EBN) who invited the ENS and EFNS to co-organize with EBN an annual European final examination for residents in neurology. The third such examination took place in 2011. A second collaboration came from the UK as both ENS and EFNS were asked to become partners together with the British Joint Neuroscience Council to finance and collaborate scientifically in the world's largest neuroscience e-learning resource called eBrain. eBrain will be launched in fall 2011 and made available free to all members of ENS and EFNS. Together with meetings and the journal, eBrain will become a major channel for neurologic training and continuous education. A third collabo-

Figure 2 Professors Gustave Moonen and Zohar Argov (European Neurological Society) and Richard Hughes and Detlef Kömpf (European Federation of Neurological Societies) sign the agreement to found the European Academy of Neurology, Budapest 2011



ration was suggested by EFNS who invited ENS to send representatives to contribute to the elaboration of European Guidelines, and a joint guideline on inflammatory muscle diseases is currently in progress.

The work of bringing the 2 societies together was initiated by Professors Gustave Moonen, secretary general of the ENS, and Jacques de Reuck, then president of the EFNS, both from Belgium and former colleagues at university. In the "Treaty of Florence" at the 2009 EFNS Congress (figure 1), Jacques de Reuck exchanged ties with Professor José Ferro, then president of the ENS, and informally agreed to set up a Transition Task Force to unravel the complex details needed to bring the 2 very differently constituted organizations together (one being a federation of national societies and the other a society of individual members). The Transition Task Force consists of Professors Jacques de Reuck, Belgium, Detlef Kömpf, Germany, and Gunhild Walde- mar, Denmark, for the EFNS and Professors Claudio Bassetti, Switzerland, José Ferro, Portugal, and Gustave Moonen, Belgium, for ENS. They drew up an agreement that was signed at the opening ceremony of the congress in Budapest in 2011 (figure 2). This agreement specified the holding of a joint EFNS-ENS congress in Germany in 2015 and the formation of a new organization, the European Academy of Neurology (EAN), which would hold its first annual congress in 2016. The negotiations have been conducted in the most cordial atmosphere and are going so well that it will be possible to bring this effort to fruition a year earlier. Therefore, we will hold a joint meeting of the EFNS and ENS in Istanbul in September 2014 and found the EAN at the same time, with its first congress in Germany in 2015. We look forward to welcoming colleagues from all over the world at these meetings. The EAN intends to be a society open to membership from all over the world and will welcome collaboration with other organizations, especially the American Academy of Neurology.

DISCLOSURE

Dr. Argov receives funding from the German Israel fund for hereditary inclusion body myopathy (HIBM) research and receives research support from the Neuromuscular Disease Foundation for research on HIBM. Dr. Hughes served as a trial member of the steering committee for Talecris ICE Trial; served on a scientific advisory board for Alexion, Genzyme, LFB, Octapharma, Biogen-Idex; served on the steering committee for Avonex; received funding for travel as a Talecris ICE trial member of steering committee; served as Coordinating Editor for *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*; received publishing royalties from BMJ Books for *Evidence Based Neurology*; and served as Chair for the CSL Behring Inter-laken symposium.

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