

2011 Budapest, Hungary

15th EFNS Congress, Budapest, Hungary, 10 - 13 September 2011

Greetings from Budapest By László Vécsei

Dear Colleagues,

The 15th Congress of EFNS has been organized in the capital city of Hungary. Budapest is the largest and one of the most beautiful cities in our country. Moreover, Hungarians are proud of scientists, like the Nobel Prize winners Albert Szent-Györgyi, Georg von Békésy and Robert Bárány who had Hungarian descents.

There have been about 5000 participants from 104 countries of the world. The opening ceremony took place in the Plenary Hall in Hungexpo. Richard Hughes (EFNS President), László Vécsei (Chairperson Local Arrangement Committee) and Nils Erik Gilhus (Chairperson Congress Programme Committee) gave welcoming words. After this, a dance performance by The Varidance Company Artists was introduced together with a welcome dinner.

In the scientific programme 12 main topics, 16 short communications, 26 teaching courses, 12 satellite symposiums (supported by pharmaceutical companies), 12 special sessions and 15 focused workshops have been presented from various parts of neurology like epilepsy, stroke, vertigo, multiple sclerosis, neuromuscular disorders, headache, etc. The lectures represented different levels from basic neuroscience to clinical neurology. In the two poster sessions a high number of posters were presented.

We remember not only the scientific part of the congress, but also the social event organized at the Budapest Market Hall in the centre of the city. These occasions are good to meet and talk with neurologists from Europe and all around the world.

In summary, it was an excellent and meaningful conference with a lot of new information.

We would like to say thanks to the EFNS Head Office, Kenes International and the different committees.

The programme was rather busy, but I hope that you found some time to see the capital, and you all enjoyed your visit. We cordially welcome you back to Budapest.

On behalf of the Local Arrangements Committee, I would like to thank all the speakers and the delegates for participating in this event. I hope to see you again in Stockholm next year.

With warm regards,

Professor Laszlo Vecsei
Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Chairperson of the Local Arrangements Committee

Welcoming address

By Richard Hughes, EFNS President

Richard Hughes, President of the European Federation of Neurological Societies (EFNS), opened the Congress welcoming the participants and thanking the Hungarian Neurological Society for inviting us to their beautiful capital city of Budapest straddling the Danube. He recalled that Hungary had produced Nobel Prize winners, Szent-Györgyi (vitamin C) and von Békésy (cochlear function), and many famous neurologists including Karl Schaffer, the father of Hungarian neurology and Dezső Miskolczy, his successor.

The Congress would include a strong programme organised by the Congress Programme Committee chaired by Professor Nils Erik Gilhus, Norway, and the Teaching Course Committee chaired by Jean-Marc Léger. One of many highlights would be the prestigious EFNS Clinical Lecture to be given by Professor Angela Vincent, UK, on the antibody mediated neurological disorders which she has done so much to unravel and for which she had recently been honoured by the prestigious award of Fellowship of the Royal Society in the UK. The EFNS was pleased to have been able to offer financial support to 200 young investigators to provide them with bursaries to attend the Congress.

The EFNS congresses provide an important forum for its committees to meet and conduct their business. This includes the scientist panels and guideline task forces who launch at this Congress the second volume of the new edition of the European Handbook of Neurological Management including 22 new or updated guidelines. These guidelines are freely available at www.efns.org and are there for the guidance of the wise neurologist rather than our unthinking obedience. Providing a mixture of evidence-based recommendations and international European expert opinion, they should be a useful resource across the continent and even outside.

A new venture also to be launched at this Congress is eBrain. This is the result of a collaboration between the British Joint Neuroscience Council, the EFNS and the European Neurological Society (ENS) led by an editorial board of Simon Shorvon (UK), Simon Thomson (UK), Thomas Berger (Austria) and Hannah Cock (UK). It includes more than 500 sessions mostly on neurology but also including neurosurgery and allied specialities. The sessions have been edited by a British and EFNS or ENS editor and the authors are a mixture of specialists from all three organisations. The eBrain programme is freely available via the EFNS website to all EFNS members. We invite you to use it and to feed back your thoughts to the editors so that it can be continually edited and improved.

The most important political event at this Congress is the signing of the agreement between the EFNS and the ENS. This was foreshadowed at the EFNS congress in Florence in 2009 when exchanged neckties became a symbol of the Treaty of Florence by which the two organisations agreed to work together. Since then a Transition Task Force, consisting of the past-Presidents Professor Jacques de Reuck and Professor José Ferro, the Secretaries General of the EFNS, Professor Detlef Kömpf, and ENS, Professor Gustave Moonen, and two others, Professors Gunhild Waldemar for the EFNS and Claudio Bassetti for the ENS, have been meeting regularly to draw up a legally binding agreement. According to this agreement, from 2015 the activities of the

EFNS and ENS shall be accomplished exclusively by a new organisation, the European Academy of Neurology (EAN). Until then the EFNS and ENS appoint the Transition Task Force of the EAN to work out the practical details enabling this goal. In the interim the Council of the EFNS and the Executive Committee of the ENS have agreed to advance the programme by one year. This will mean that there will be a joint meeting of the EFNS and the ENS in Istanbul in 2014 when the Board of the EAN will be elected and the first meeting of the new EAN will be held in Germany in 2015.

Professor Hughes paid special tribute to the two Belgians who more than anyone else had initiated the process of agreement which was so much wanted by members of both organisations, Professors Jacques de Reuck and Gustave Moonen.

(At the conclusion of his address Professor Hughes invited the President of the ENS, Professor Zohar Argov, the Secretary General of the ENS Professor Gustave Moonen and the Secretary General of the EFNS Professor Detlef Kömpf to join him on the rostrum to sign the agreement.)