



Eberhard Deisenhammer, Austria

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### Personal Remarks

It happened in early 1991 that I met Franz Gerstenbrand in Vienna. He was to meet Eduardo Tolosa and wanted me to join him. He told me on the way to the Hotel de France, where Eduardo just had breakfast, about a meeting of leading European neurologists in Marseille, and the decision to found a Federation of European neurological societies.

He reported on the support of the WFN president, Lord Walton. Furthermore, he mentioned that I should be Secretary General of this new organisation. I was rather reluctant and explained this by a neurological deficit I suffered already as a young boy: I have a very specific memory deficit; I have a very bad memory of faces, I am often unable to recognize faces and many therefore thought that I was arrogant.

He did of course not accept this argument. We had the meeting at the hotel with E Tolosa who was one of the first Vice presidents and at the beginning of the Congress in Vienna in 1991, Lord Walton heartedly greeted me as the future Secretary General of the EFNS.

What happened during this congress can be read in the chapter 'History of the Archives'.

We started the administration of the newly founded federation at the Neurological Hospital Rosenhügel in Vienna, and Prof Schnaberth, chair of the Neurological Department, hosted our office and we shared the rooms with the Austrian Neurological Society.

Uschi Tschabitscher who was partly employed by the Austrian Society was from beginning the administrative officer and executive director and her ability to convince everyone of the positive future of the EFNS, her charming character and many other qualities were uppermost important for the further development of the EFNS.

At the start, we were an organisation whose members were highly enthusiastic, but we had no money. It showed that we could convince the industry with our promising future and they sponsored the federation with seed money over many years. - This was especially Jes Olesen's ability in communicating with our partners and it was his very straight way to argue about what ever our conviction was.

During these first years we could survive despite minimal income from the first meetings and the first congress in Marseille.

But with the congress in Rome in 1996 we had a solid financial basis for the future.

For me it was a wonderful experience how a situation with a couple of people who are convinced of a common idea and a common ideology, just at the right time, can be the origin of such an expanding and powerful organisation like the EFNS.