



Pavel Kalvach, Czech Republic

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Personal Remarks

There are two constraints in everyone's intellectual existence. The first, smaller one, is a limited personal capacity of talents, memory, and reasoning. The bigger one is related to individual's social surrounding, which determines the ability to communicate, the degree to which our ideas will be accepted, mutual understanding and the extent of fertilization in mutual reasoning.

Curiosity and craving for knowledge make us beat against the bars of our cages, bend them outwards, seek novelty and connect fragments into new pieces of knowledge. That is why we eagerly read, observe, attempt to formulate and re-phrase our definitions. Quite a demanding work! When eyelids are falling and the night is advanced, we are questioning ourselves whether we will be able to manage the next day's routine? Yet with the break of day, we are here again, refreshed, cleverer to navigate our ideas through better distinguished roads. In fact, only as far, as they would be accepted at least by someone. Often, we encounter lack of interest, ignorance or even protests. Someone may say: „Your work has been in vain, it's not within our grasp! Moreover, your ideas are causing chaos to our existing orders! You may cry out as much as you want to, no-one will be listening?"

Both confines, the first one personal and the second one social, are heavy barriers to our pursuits. But there are some exceptional places in the world, where ideas are welcome and where outer harmony helps to dispel the clouds. Mutual understanding allows promoting individual endeavours, making people better and more useful, and making groups and corporations more successful. Such was my lucky life among my fellow neurologists in general and such was my spiritual connection with the EFNS in particular. It was indeed a wonderful experience!

I had the privilege to spend 2 years as assistant of our then General secretary Eberhard Deisenhammer, 4 years as a General secretary myself and 4 years as a Vice-president. In these roles I have experienced a tremendous advancement of the EFNS from in fact only an idea to the today flourishing society, brimming over the frontiers of Europe. The preparatory attempts of Daniel Bartko in the late eighties were skilfully brought to an official establishment

of the EFNS by Franz Gerstenbrand and his collaborators. The development in the nineties was marked by great enthusiasm of our management committee. Unable to list the great names of our EFNS protagonists (see committees), their far-reaching estimation of the future and their different personal sorts of providence, I must mention at least the amalgamating nobleness of Uschi Tschabitscher. She was a special spirit making our meetings and communications an extremely friendly and encouraging opportunity. It was also mainly with her that we have developed a lot of details to our common target of bridging the western and the eastern European neurology.

A similar progress could have been also observed during the last 6 years in our third project „Department to department (DD) programme“, where our Prague branch office has once again been involved. With the improved financial wealth of the EFNS our negotiations in the Management committee – together with Jes Olesen, Wolf Dieter Heiss, Johan Aarli, Eberhard Deisenhammer, Jean-Marc Legér, Wolfgang Grisold, Detlef Koempf, Richard Hughes, Uschi Tschabitscher, Isabel Illa, Gunhild Waldemar, Lisa Mueller, Kris Selmaj, Jacques de Reuck, Gianluigi Lenzi, Giorgio Cruccu and others have found good conditions for introducing this third educational project. Nowadays 66 grantees annually can make advantage of a Euro 1.500.- grant to perform a 6-week practice in a neurological department of excellence. Up to now more than 300 colleagues have been able to "tank up" knowledge in more than 50 European high-level workplaces. The administrative work is again taken care of by Ing. Magda Dohnalová. Often, when sitting in her office above the endless correspondence with colleagues who fail to get visa and need letters of confirmation, or who have insufficient contacts with the authorities of the particular hosting city, e-mailing with the hosting departments, we are weary of this office work. Nevertheless, when eventually reading the final reports, we are very pleased with the expressions of satisfaction both from the grantees as well as from their hosts. Seeing such a mutual congenial compliance among our colleagues makes one proud of our profession. Uschi Tschabitscher would have been smiling with satisfaction at this fulfilment of her vision of „one big neurological family“.

I was especially fortunate to be endowed by a long-life period among fellow neurologists and leading personalities of European neurology. It was a nice experience to recognize also future leading personalities "in spe" – those young colleagues who were eagerly stretching their hands

for the opportunities which this special society has been emanating. Those ones, who have appreciated this way of enriching mutually each other. I am grateful to Prof. Franz Gerstenbrand who has opened me the doors to the EFNS and to Magda Dohnalová and her husband whose everlasting diligence have born so much of the freight giving wings to our endeavours.