

1998 Seville, Spain

3rd EFNS Congress, Seville, Spain, 19 - 25 September 1998

Welcome address

Europe walks with a firm pace towards a commonplace for all the Europeans, a huge country with no borders where each and everyone develop to their best ourselves with no problems. The old ghosts that in other times prevented the unity of Europe and that caused so much suffering to their citizens seem to fade away definitively.

All this as required a long process sometimes traumatic, painstaking and a great effort from all the European countries. The clue for the final solution lied on the communication, on the dialogue between all the people. This effort on the communication has shown to the European people that there are more ties, more links that unite them than centrifugal forces that keep them apart. Once more, communication has won over incomprehension and isolation.

Neurology is certainly one of the sciences that is more related with the communication between human beings. The nervous system is mainly that part of our organism that allows the relationship with our fellow men. Through the sensorial organs and the nervous terminations external signs give us information of the events that happen in our surrounding as the subtle changes in our fellow men can be detected by our nervous system. The processing and identification of those signs give rise to the right answers that allow the communication between each other and with the outside. We can say that the painstaking process of the European integration would not have been achieved without the contribution of the nervous system of all and each of the European citizens.

Spain, due to its peculiar geographical situation and to historical reasons, since thousands of years ago has seen different cultures and civilizations passing and living on its land, some of them developing in our country for very long periods, even for centuries. The co-existence of different cultures, ways of thinking and religions forged a special character to the inhabitants of Spain, making them specially used to dialogue and to communication. Has been and is specially outstanding in Spain.

Neurology as a discipline that studies the nervous system and this as a communicative means can also contribute to the unity of Europe. That is the reason why the Congresses of the EFNS are extraordinarily convenient and a golden occasion to serve as an efficient link of communication, understanding and an exercise of tolerance among Europeans, efficiently contributing to the unity of Europe. Spain, an old European country with thousands of years of history behind her, and a well-demonstrated capacity for dialogue and tolerance among the very different people that lived and settled on the land may work in this Congress of the EFNS as a crucible and a hinge between the European people, contributing to a better understanding between them. The festive and fruitful dialogue as well as the communication that can be present during the III CONGRESS OF THE EFNS in Sevilla, may demonstrate as it did to Don Quixote (Cervantes immortal character) that sometimes we believe we are fighting against giants, huge enemies when they are just pacific windmills deformed by an

illusion of our senses. Welcome to all the Europeans, to all the citizens of Europe to Sevilla in September 1998.

Jose Chacon
Local Chairman of the III Congress of the EFNS

Additional Information

More than 4000 participants attended the 3rd EFNS Congress, making it the largest neurological meeting held in Europe to date. Delegates came from all over the world. For the first time the EFNS awarded bursaries to 50 young neurologists whose abstracts had been accepted by the Congress Programme Committee.

Apart from the main topics dealing with all major neurological diseases, there were numerous focused workshops, each dealing with a particular narrow subject in a subfield of neurology. The EFNS is very pleased to note that this format of session becomes more and more popular at each congress. The teaching courses were a tremendous success, and bigger rooms had to be sought to accommodate all participants. More than 800 posters were mounted in the spacious poster hall. It was the first time that a special poster session was dedicated to education in neurology.

In addition to the classic congress programme, special events took place. One of them was a symposium on epilepsy and the Arts with live musical examples, which enchanted the audience, as well as presentations about literature and painting in which this disease can be examined.

The EFNS held a joint meeting with the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) on the cost-effective value of neurological services, organized by Jes Olesen, EFNS President, and Antonio Culebras, AAN Secretary. Presentations were given by AAN and EFNS representatives, including AAN President Steven Ringel.

James Toole, President of the World Federation of Neurology (WFN), and Lord Walton of Detchant, Past President of the WFN, were honorary guests in Seville, marking the close co-operation between the WFN and the EFNS.

We hope that you had a pleasant time in the beautiful city of Seville and returned home with the feeling of having deepened your knowledge of the neurological topics presented.