President’s message

As the new incoming president of EFIC, I would like to thank all the EFIC councilors for their vote of confidence in electing me to lead EFIC in the forthcoming three years into the next Millennium. I assure all of the council members, and the entire membership of EFIC, that I will devote most of my energy to promoting the goals of EFIC, and ultimately, the interests of all those whose quality of life is challenged by acute and chronic pain.

Achieving our common goals depends critically on co-operation among the individual chapters that make up EFIC. Constructive interaction between the European IASP chapters, the central governing bodies of EFIC, and the council and executive committee of IASP is the best way to promote our common interests in the European region. I am proud to have the opportunity to lead in this effort as President of EFIC.

As for my background for this job, I had a wonderful school. I have served six years in the IASP council. This has enabled me to become acquainted with most of the issues related to the functioning of the mother organisation. I believe that the model of IASP and many of its established procedures can be applied fruitfully and used by EFIC. EFIC, as the name implies, is a consortium of IASP chapters. In my opinion, it is essential for EFIC to deepen the bond with IASP and to take advantage of IASP’s readiness to promote research and education in the field of pain. In my view, the ambassadors of Europe in IASP are the European Councilors. These individuals are chosen by election in accordance with the IASP bylaws which require that representation in the council be not only from different disciplines, but also from different regions. I believe therefore, that Europeans who serve in the IASP Council should be spokesmen (and women) for Europe, amongst their other tasks.

EFIC also represents the members of the various European chapters who are not registered as members of IASP. In fact, a majority of EFIC’s membership of over 10,000 pain professionals are not formally members of IASP. I am confident that exposure to IASP programs and initiatives, such as the 9th IASP World Congress on Pain, which will be held in August in Vienna, will help Europeans to become more familiar with IASP, and its various important projects.

Six years ago there was a strong feeling of vacuum, and a felt need for a European initiative to advance many of the issues related to pain research, education, and management that relate specifically to the family of European countries. Since the establishment of EFIC this vacuum is beginning to be filled. We have had two successful European Congresses and the preparations for the third one, to be held next year in Nice, are progressing well. EFIC now has its own journal, the European Journal of Pain, which is developing into an important periodical in the field, alongside the IASP’s journal Pain. EFIC has also developed bridges with the European Union and with the World Health Organisation. Hopefully these will yield new opportunities for improving research and education and eventually better pain management for all our patients. EFIC has a strong and talented new Executive Board. I have every faith that each of my colleagues on the Executive Board, and on the EFIC Council, will spare no effort to push forward with the work already begun. This newsletter will provide a forum for promoting dialogue among the various European chapters. In addition, I would like you, the members of EFIC, to see it as a vehicle to pass on your ideas and information to other pain professionals in Europe. The Newsletter will appear periodically, and I hope that you will contribute to it. It is one more way in which we in the European Region can transform into practice the enormous pool of good will and talent with which we have been blessed.

David Nio, M.D.
EFIC President

Federation news

Extracts from the minutes of the Council Meeting held in Heraklion, Crete, 26th March 1999

Twenty-two of the twenty-three EFIC Chapters were represented at the meeting, which was held by kind invitation of the Greek, Israeli and Turkish Chapters at their joint Congress.

Report from the Executive Board

Professor Manfred Zimmermann summarised the achievements of the Executive Board during its three-year term of office: developing a distinctive identity and role, proceeding with legal registration (this process has been completed since the Council meeting), and successfully launching the European Journal of Pain.

Many written reports were received from the Chapters, which are summarised on page 3.

Task Forces

The Task Force on Neurmodulation of Pain worked throughout 1998, culminating with the launch of the Consensus Document at the European Parliament in November 1998 (see Dr Plagkhi’s report on this on page 3). The Task Force on Education has been less active recently, but its work is not yet finished, and under new leadership might make a considerable impact. The Task Force on Opioid Legislation continues to produce results which are being released as they are ready, in view of the wide scope of its remit.

European Journal of Pain

Two full volumes of four issues each have now been published, and it is establishing a reputation as a high quality international pain journal covering virtually all scientific and clinical aspects in the field. It is now being indexed by the Institute of Scientific Information in three of their databases, and also by Chemical Abstracts. The US National Library of Medicine is also evaluating it.
EFIC NEWSLETTER

Editor, Leon Plaghi, Belgium

Editorial Board
Antoon de Laat  Serdar Erdine
Nadine Memran-Pourcher Rudolf Morawetz
David Niv

Scientific Secretariat
Carole de Lucignan
Place Carnoy 11, Box 110,
B1200-Brussels, Belgium.
Tel/Fax +32.2.764.3806
e-mail: efic@skynet.be

EFIC EXECUTIVE BOARD

President, David Niv, Israel
Vice-President, Harald Breivik, Norway
Secretary, Serdar Erdine, Turkey
Treasurer, Giustino Varrarsi, Italy
Ex-officio, Leon Plaghi, Belgium

President's Address
Center for Pain Medicine
Tel-Aviv - Sourasky Medical Center
6 Weizman St., 64239 Tel-Aviv, Israel
Tel: +972-3-6974477 Fax: +972-3-6974583
e-mail: davidniv@tasmc.health.gov.il

EFIC COUNCILLORS

Name         Country       Fax
Rudolf Morawetz Austria +43-512-504-2463
Leon Plaghi Belgium +32-2-764-8936
Douglas Justins Britain & Ireland +44-171-922-8318
Jiri Kozak Czech Republic +42-0-2-2443-5576
Rein Zupping Estonia +372-2-645-0264
Nadine Memran-Pourcher France +33-4-9203-85-41
Klaus Lehmann Germany +49-221-476-4136/6688
Vasiliki Chimonitsy-Kypriou Greece +30-1-644-8686
Dezso Embey-Iszsin Hungary +36-1-224-8620
Arie Kuritsky Israel +972-9-771-6630
Leonardo Vecchiet Italy +39-0-871-551086
Arunas Scupokas Lithuania +370-7-792627
Maciej Hilger Poland +48-22-648-0219
Nestor Rodrigues Portugal +351-2-650-5264
Oxind Mungiu Romania +40-32-211-620
Georgy Kryzhanovsky Russia +7-985-151-9540
Jorgen Boivie Scandinavia +46-13-24438
Marta Kulichova Slovakia +421-8-423-5836/4157
Nevenka Krcevski-Skvarc Slovenia +386-62-315-136
Enrique Reig Spain +34-91-593-4612
Elia Alon Switzerland +41-91-825-6990
Willem Meijler The Netherlands +31-50-361-9317
Ender Berker Turkey +90-212-631-2541

EDITORS OF THE EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF PAIN

Editor-in-Chief, Ulf Lindblom
Deputy Editor, Fernando Cervero

European Journal of Pain,
W.B.Saunders Company Limited,
24-28 Oval Road,
London NW1 7DX, UK.
Tel:+44 171 424 4200.
Fax:+44 171 482 2293/485 4752

The European Federation of IASP Chapters is an international not-for-profit organisation registered in Brussels, Belgium in May 1999.

Opinions expressed in the Newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of EFIC, its Executive Board or Councillors.

European Pain Congress 2000 - Nice
The Scientific Programme Committee, chaired by Professor Harald Breivik, has produced its first proposal, which promises an interesting Congress for delegates from all backgrounds. The first announcement has recently been published and will be sent to EFIC members shortly.

Elections of Executive Officers 1999-2002
Dr Jorgen Boivie acted as Election Manager. The results of the election are as follows:

President
David Niv 12 votes
Leon Plaghi 10 votes
Vice-President
Harald Breivik 10 votes
Nestor Rodrigues 7 votes
Daniel le Bars 2 votes
Zsuzsanna Weisenfeld-Hallin 2 votes
Maria Adelaide Giambardino 1 vote

Honorary Secretary
Serdar Erdine 12 votes
Leon Plaghi 10 votes
Treasurer
Giustino Varrarsi 10 votes
Leon Plaghi 6 votes
Rudolf Morawetz 5 votes
Nadine Memran-Pourcher 1 vote

The Executive Board for the term 1999-2002 is thus David Niv, President, Harald Breivik, Vice-President, Serdar Erdine, Honorary Secretary and Giustino Varrarsi, Treasurer. As the statutes require that, because EFIC is registered in Belgium, one member of the Board must be a Belgian citizen, Leon Plaghi was appointed ex officio.

In accordance with the statutes, the full version of these minutes are available on request from the Honorary Secretary.

The European Journal of Pain - EFIC's own journal

As part of its mission to improve the management of pain in Europe, EFIC publishes the European Journal of Pain jointly with W.B.Saunders. It is now an established journal publishing a diversity of articles making it a global forum on all major aspects of pain and its management. It is now being indexed by the Institute of Scientific Information in three of their databases, and also by Chemical Abstracts. The US National Library of Medicine is also evaluating it. Why not look up the latest contents on the web?

www.hbuk.co.uk/wbs/ejp

If you received this newsletter because you are a member of your national pain society, you may well be able to subscribe to the Journal at a substantial discount. You can write or e-mail the Scientific Secretariat for details.

PAIN IN EUROPE 2000

ADVANCES IN PAIN RESEARCH AND THERAPY

Third International Congress of the European Federation of IASP Chapters (EFIC)

Nice, France, September 27 -30 2000

For further information contact:
M. Philippe Bregain,
SOCFI,
14, rue Mandar,
75002 Paris, FRANCE
Fax: +33 1 40 26 04 44
e-mail: bregain@socfi.fr

continued from page 1
EFIC at the European Parliament

On November 4th 1998 the European Parliament in Brussels played host for the launch of the EFIC Consensus Statement on the Neuromodulation of Pain, which had been prepared by an EFIC Task Force supported by an educational grant from Medtronic Europe. The aims of this event were threefold:

- To draw the attention of politicians and the wider public to the problems suffered by chronic pain patients in Europe, the inequalities of access to treatment, including neuromodulation techniques and the need to harmonise standards of care.
- To promote the role of European institutions in facilitating research and development at a European level.
- To persuade the World Health Organisation that its existing 'Pain Ladder' should be updated to include new developments in Advanced Pain Therapies such as neuromodulation techniques.

The meeting was attended by members of the European Parliament, representatives of EFIC including members of the Task Force and a substantial number of media reporters. They were addressed by Professor Manfred Zimmermann (then EFIC President) on EFIC's initiatives in the pain field, Dr Gerhard Müller-Schwefe (Germany) on the prevalence of chronic pain in Europe and Dr Jean-Pierre Van Buyten, a Belgian pain specialist who gave case studies showing that chronic pain can afflict patients in many situations other than terminal illness. Professor Jan Gybels, who had chaired the Task Force, explained the importance of its conclusions and the practical uses of advanced pain therapies. From the European Commission, Dr Philippe Jeihenson spoke of the possibilities for research into pain carried out across national boundaries to qualify for assistance from DG XII (the directorate-general for research). Dr Valentin Korotkchouk (WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer - Pain Ladder) outlined the prospects for improving the current Pain Ladder and Dr Tokuo Yoshida, also from the WHO, finished the speeches with a discussion of the disparities in treatment available in various countries because of their different views on drugs and divergent healthcare systems.

As a result of this event some interesting contacts have been made. EFIC is being kept informed of the meetings of the European Parliaments intergroup 'Europe against Pain', a multiparty organisation which promotes the improvement of pain treatment facilities in Europe. It is seeking to co-operate with the International Association of Patient Organisations (IAPo), a recently established umbrella group that brings together patient organisations which endeavour to advocate for sufferers from a myriad range of diseases, as pain is a symptom in many different illnesses. Many of the members of the Task Force on Neuromodulation continue to serve on it, and a new project, on the Epidemiology of Chronic Pain and Advanced Pain Therapies, has an Advisory Board formed largely by members of the Neuromodulation Task Force. These developments, particularly cooperation with other groups that work to improve pain management, treatment and political awareness can only be beneficial for all those involved, and EFIC should be well placed to take advantage from them.

Leon Plaghi,
Brussels, April 1999

Reports from chapters

A summary of the Chapter reports which were presented at the last EFIC Council meeting in Heraklion, Crete.

Belgium. 320 members. The main annual meeting, held in March 1998, focused on 'Pain in the Elderly'. Various working groups have also met. A quarterly newsletter is circulated, and all members also receive the European Journal of Pain. Several prizes and grants have been awarded. The Belgian Pain Society is engaging in discussions with the Belgian Government on the structures for pain treatment in Belgium.

Czech Republic. 313 members. The main annual meeting was held in November 1998. Since the beginning of 1998 a quarterly newsletter "Bolest" (Pain) has been issued. Regular scientific conferences are arranged and an integrated system of continuing education has been created; a certificate is issued to those who pass the course in "Multidisciplinary pain management".

Estonia. 40 members. The main annual meeting, held in October 1998, was dedicated to the psychological aspects of pain treatment. Three five-day continuing medical education courses on pain management were held.

France. The main annual meeting took place in November 1998 and a special programme with a wide variety of topics was prepared. Separate high level courses were also organised, as were a number of meetings of special interest groups.

GB & Ireland. 963 members. The main annual meeting took place in April 1998. The special interest groups continue to hold regular meetings. The newsletter is distributed quarterly, and other publications are doing well. 6000 copies of the booklet for patients 'Information for Patients' have been distributed.

Hungary. The main annual meeting took place in October 1998 and the main topics were 'Malignant Bone Pain' and 'The Role of Neurosurgery in Pain Treatment'. Twelve local meetings were organised during the year, as well as a five-day Postgraduate course on Pain Therapy.

Israel. 270 members. The main annual meeting, held in November 1998, was entitled 'Pain Management - Toward 2000'. The EFIC consensus statement on Neuro-modulation was used to obtain the approval of the Israeli Ministry of Health for financing this form of treatment.

Lithuania. 132 members. The first Congress of the Lithuanian Pain Society was held in March 1998. A working group has been set up with the Lithuanian Ministry of Health to create pain management services in Lithuania. The other main activity has been the promotion of pain education.

Poland. 204 members. In 1998 two national meetings were held, one, in May, was devoted to advances in cancer pain treatment and new forms of opioid usage, the other, in October, was entitled "Advances in Chronic Pain Treatment". Three regional conferences devoted to chronic pain were also organised.

Portugal. In October 1998 the Associação Portuguesa Para o Estudo da Dor was officially recognised by the Portuguese government as the principle body for assisting with policy decisions concerning pain treatment in the hospitals of the country. A number of courses, lectures and seminars were organised.

Slovak Republic. 172 members. The 1998 annual meeting took place in October in Tielme with the main topics Paediatric pain, Non-opioids and Coanalgesics and Palliative Care - ethical problems. The 1st EFIC symposium was held during the meeting, organised by Professor Manfred Zimmermann. In March 1998 the Slovak Ministry of Health approved Algesiology as a medical sub-speciality.

Slovenia. Three scientific meetings were held in 1998: an RF pain treatment workshop (sponsored by Radiomics), the 2nd Seminar on Pain, which was the regular annual meeting, and a symposium on Headache. The proceedings were published for all these meetings. The association has translated two issues of "Pain - Clinical Updates" and the IASP "Curriculum for Professional Education in Pain Management".

Switzerland. 141 members. The Annual meeting was held in June 1998 in Geneva, the scientific topic was "The traumatic cervical distortion (Whiplash)". The chapter subscribes in bulk to the European Journal of Pain.
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 19, 1999</td>
<td>Maastricht, The Netherlands</td>
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<td>What Works for Whom? Customizing Interdisciplinary Pain Treatment: A Series of Seminars</td>
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<td>Aug 22-27, 1999</td>
<td>Vienna, Austria</td>
<td>9th World Congress on Pain.</td>
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<td>Aug 28-29, 1999</td>
<td>Innsbruck, Austria</td>
<td>Pain and Consciousness: Interfering on Common Issues.</td>
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<td>Prague, Czech Republic</td>
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<td>Aug 28-31, 1999</td>
<td>Budapest, Hungary</td>
<td>1st Annual European Course on Palliative Care</td>
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<td>Autonomic Nervous System: Rics in Chronic Neurological Pain</td>
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<td>Sept 20-24, 1999</td>
<td>Munich, Germany</td>
<td>11th Annual Meeting of the European Society for Pain Research (joint Annual Congress).</td>
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