

The following newsletter was published in '**Community Dental Health**' in March 2000

Presidential address.

The following address was delivered by Professor Roberto Ferro, on taking up the presidency of the European Association of Dental Public Health, during the Third Annual congress in Strasbourg, France, September 1999.

"Being appointed president of a scientific association is not only a great professional and personal honour, but also a demanding commitment. A new association like ours, having laid a good foundation, needs to grow and develop in order to fulfill its aims and be rewarding for its members.

Let me begin by making one key point, as declared in the written aim of our association - the promotion of oral health - should also be the main focus of our daily working lives. This however, is not as obvious as at first may appear. In my country, the culture of promoting dental health has not been of high priority and I consider the lack of professional, social and political awareness of oral health matters a core issue in Italy.

Although dental students in nearly all Italian universities are taught how to deal with dental caries, periodontal diseases, and provide orthodontic treatment, they are not so imbued with the concepts of prevention and promotion of oral health. Moreover, in Italy, in contrast to the situation in Scandinavia, there is not a common cultural and social perception of good oral health as a public health concern. This presents a huge gap to bridge both culturally and practically, between Northern and Southern Europe.

It was for this reason that I was very pleased when, in 1995, I was told that Dr Cynthia Pine was forming a new association of professionals throughout Europe involved in the promotion of oral health.

At that time I felt there was a strong need for such an association to act as a forum for news, discussions, new developments and technologies, social and professional links and establishment of collaborative research among individuals and institutions like the impressive study carried out between EADPH (European Association Dental Public Health) and NIDRC (National Institute of Dental and Cranio Facial Research). Further I hope that the association can support new political plans for oral health promotion on a local and national basis and can act as an arena where, ideas, projects and even doubts, could be debated and compared.

So, I would like to thank Cynthia for her idea and her determination in pursuing this challenge, her Presidency will be a hard act to follow. I'm sure you will agree with me that she is a friendly and charming person who has worked hard to create and shape this organisation and I feel that the legacy she has left us is one that I am proud to preside over and I will bear the responsibility knowing that it is a heavy burden on my shoulders.

I would also like to thank everybody who has worked enthusiastically despite difficulties, for the success of this organisation. In particular, I would like to thank Anne Byres, Cynthia's alter ego, our treasurer Klaus Pieper, whose efforts now mean that since last April our Association is registered in Germany, our former secretary, now vice-president Eeva Widstrom, Kathryn Neville for her past efforts carried out with vigour and skill in the office of executive for communications, our editor Jan-Gert Truin and Annerose Borutta.

The previous congress in Spain was organised wonderfully by Spanish colleagues, and I would like to thank our French friends for this excellent meeting and this splendid venue.

If I have missed out anyone else that deserves mention, then I am sorry.

And now to the future. First of all it is sensible and practical to follow the path we have started on. Everyone will note how our association is being shaped and honed. We have come a long way since our first congress. We now have working groups on four different topics, the implementation of an international collaborative study with NICDR, and we're asking our members about which research areas we should be studying in the future.

So we have many irons in the fire. I would like to speak in more detail about two of these aspects. Firstly, increasing the number of members. This is a feasible objective. There are now more than 300 members from 32 countries. Members from the United Kingdom make up 50% of the total and, in my opinion, we need to affiliate more people from other parts of Europe especially the South and East in order to spread the culture of dental public health. If we can improve the situation in countries where there is scarce interest in this topic we can develop a uniform, common European point of view.

More members means more influence and so we could act as advisors to the European Commission, Government Agencies, Scientific Societies, Sick Funds, industry and so on. I would therefore like to solicit the help, not only of the councillors, but also of everyone who believes in our aim, to be a prophet in his or her own country, and proselytise our cause.

Secondly - quantity should be linked to quality. The quality of a scientific association comes on one hand from the quality of its membership and on the other from the degree of their personal involvement which is crucial to the creation of a unifying spirit. Collaborative research is the best way to involve people with different professional experiences in the same aim. Furthermore, research such as this allows frequent and long-lasting contacts that are a basis for friendship too. The working groups are a valid means of achieving this aim and they should be able to produce well-thought-out suggestions and guidelines, to act as benchmarks for whoever should need them.

Information exchange is vital and fortunately these days we have e-mail which provides a quick and inexpensive way of doing this. So I would encourage the Presidents of the working groups to use whatever means they can to liven up and promote discussion at all times.

In conclusion, I would like to be a stimulus for promoting discussion and in turn to be stimulated by your ideas. So please don't hesitate if you want to get in touch with me and the Board for whatever your feel would be useful for our association. I wish to thank everybody again for the good work they have done and are yet to do and lastly, good luck."

Roberto Ferro, Strasbourg (France), September 9 th, 1999

4th Congress EADPH 2000 in Cork, Ireland.

Preparations are well advanced for the joint BASCD and EADPH Conference in University College Cork, Ireland on the 14 - 15 September, 2000. The theme of the Scientific Programme will be "Reducing Inequalities in Europe: Role of Fluoride"; all speakers are well renowned in their field. The programme kicks off with an informal mixer in the City Hall on Wednesday 13th, with plenty of good music, food and an adequacy of Guinness! The Scientific Programme will be opened by Ms Mary McAleese, President of Ireland. On the evening of Thursday 14th a gala banquet will be held in the Rochestown Park Hotel. Festivities will include a traditional Irish ceili. Closing date for abstracts for posters is 20 April 2000. Full details of the meeting, including scientific programme, registration, accommodation and abstract submission can be found at the following web site:

EADPH Newpage – information sharing

This newpage is designed as a forum whereby members of the Association can share information which may be of interest to those in other states. All contributions will be considered and should be forwarded to:

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