



EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF SOCIETIES FOR HAND THERAPY

Dear delegates, dear members of EFSHT,

The by gone year since the previous council meeting in June 2016 has been a special one for the executive committee as well as for me personally. In addition to its regular duties and tasks the executive committee has been intensively involved in planning and organizing the upcoming XII EFSHT congress, and for myself this was my first term as president of the federation.

Planning and organizing the Eurohand2017, the combined XXII FESSH and XII EFSHT congress, has been both a pleasure and a challenge for the executive committee as well as for the organizing and scientific committees that were set up in 2016 to work on this congress. EFSHT has now had a bigger role than ever before in the organizing process of a FESSH-EFSHT combined congress, and the executive committee has had to co-work with FESSH and the congress office without any pre existing rules or standards for this kind of process and work. We were aware of the financial and practical risks that were involved in this project, but with strong teamwork within EFSHT and good collaboration with FESSH and the congress office, I feel we have managed this challenge well.

All the executive committee members have had a double or triple role when considering the regular tasks of the executive committee together with the organizing and scientific committee tasks related to the Eurohand2017. The benefit of these multiple roles has been in having a constant, general view of the congress-organizing project and the finances related to it. It has also allowed us the access to any information related to the scientific program planning, congress location planning and council meeting planning that has either involved EFSHT finances or required decision-making within the executive committee. I believe all this has help us in making decisions that serve a bigger purpose but are yet financially sustainable and in creating an event that is scientifically attractive to many EFSHT members. The downside of the multiple roles is of course the amount of work and time we have had to put in in order to deal with all the different tasks.

I know in the near future it will be brought up to EFSHT's consideration whether the federation should take this kind of a stronger role in organizing the combined congresses in the future as opposed to the previous tradition where national societies have had the major role and responsibility. Our experience with Eurohand2017 shows that this can be done and it has its own benefits e.g. through wider professional networks to allow planning of diverse scientific programs. Our experience with Eurohand2017 can also be noted when considering the risks and challenges of shifting the congress-organizing responsibility from national societies to the federation. There is no easy solution or answer to this possible shift but I feel the possibility has to be

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thoroughly considered with the goal of developing the standards and contents of future scientific congress.

During the past year, the executive committee has worked via email, Dropbox and Skype. We have had a regular monthly Skype meeting to discuss and handle matters related to the federation and the upcoming congress. In addition there have been monthly Skype meetings with the Eurohand2017 organizing and scientific committee members. I feel that the monthly executive committee meetings are necessary for more thorough exchange of ideas and discussions than can be achieved via email. But I also feel that the executive committee could and should develop further its efficiency in proceeding matters and in its decision-making processes. As a president I have failed to put my best efforts in developing these already existing EFSHT and executive committee processes. Some of these already existing processes within the federation and the executive committee can be handled routinely due to their tradition and they can therefore be easily left unchanged with new and more acute matters demanding more attention. I hope that after the Eurohand2017 I can bring in more of my personal efforts and ideas to develop the executive committee work and other EFSHT related matters.

One of the main concerns I have when considering the future of EFSHT is the lack of people who are willing, interested or motivated to share their efforts and knowledge for the benefit of the federation and indirectly of its members. We have seen this during the past years as lack of activity and discussion among delegates, and also as the difficulty in recruiting people to work in EFSHT committees or to contribute to scientific congresses. We acknowledge the fact that personal and global finances play a major role in such matters and can restrict people from participating in these activities. If this is however a growing tendency, and together with the non-profit profile of EFSHT and ever tightening sponsorship regulations, we might face a situation one day where the federation can no longer maintain its status and can no longer achieve its ultimate goals of doing good for hand therapy in Europe. Should we therefore start to think how EFSHT, its structures and its roles, could be changed so that it would remain attractive to its members and offer achievable possibilities regardless of the challenges this era puts on it.

Regardless of the challenges, occasional difficulties and frustration we've faced during the past year I still feel that the learning curves for both the executive committee and myself have been positive. We have maintained a positive spirit within the executive committee and helped each other over our own duty lines. I personally have learnt a great deal about being in a leadership role as well as about the complexities of organizing an international congress. And I have a great deal to learn more. I thank the rest of the executive committee for their support, guidance and patience during this year.

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