

2004 Paris, France

8th EFNS Congress, Paris, France, 4 - 7 September 2004

The EFNS Congress in Paris, 2004: The "French Touch"

The 8th Congress of the European Federation of Neurological Societies was held in Paris from 4th to 7th September 2004 and was hosted by the Société Française de Neurologie (SFN). Since the beginning of the successful story of the EFNS, Paris never had the opportunity of welcoming the EFNS congress, although one of the first congresses took place in Marseille in 1995. For this reason and others, which were to make this annual meeting a memorable event in the tradition of the previous congresses, the Local Organizing Committee, chaired by Yves Agid, Past President of the SFN and Charles Pierrot-Deseilligny, President of the SFN in 2004, wished to let the Paris meeting be more than a ritual event. The EFNS Congress in Paris, 2004: The "French Touch"

The result of these efforts, together with those of the Congress Programme Committee chaired by Jacques De Reuck and of the Teaching Course Committee chaired by Johan Aarli, were perfectly "à la hauteur". 4268 participants coming from 91 countries all over the world, including USA, Canada, Asia, Near and Middle East etc., attended the Paris Congress and filled the rooms of the Palais des Congres for 4 days. More figures will give an idea of the outstanding scientific level of this meeting: 27 lectures given in the "Main Topics" 239 communications in the oral sessions (to which we have to add 27 oral communications presented in the Focused Workshops), 1593 communications in the poster sessions, 13 Teaching Courses, and 21 Satellite Symposia. It is quite impossible to summarize the quality of such a huge scientific programme in a few lines. However, we may emphasize: The success of the introductory teaching course "How do I examine?", co-chaired by the President of the EFNS, Wolf-Dieter Heiss and Yves Agid, and attended by almost 350 participants despite the early timing. The improving quality of the poster presentations and the outstanding level of the 2 oral sessions of the Tournament for Young Neurologists, the winners of which received the Uschi Tschabitscher Prize for Young Neurologists.

The high participation in the Focused Workshops, some of them devoted to very original and usually under-represented topics such as `prion diseases`, `patent foramen oval, stroke and migraine`, `neurological channelopathies`, `Wilson's disease` or `brain cell therapy for neurodegenerative diseases`; The success of the Special Sessions, particularly of those devoted to "Neurology and Arts" and "History of Neurology", the last one followed by a nice "Neurohistory Tour", which was co-organized with some Past-Presidents of the SFN and brought the participants to the Charcot Library of the Salpêtrière Hospital and to the Musée d'Histoire de la Médecine in the old Faculty in Quartier Latin; And finally the "Joint Mediterranean Symposium", which brought together speakers from Neurological Societies of six Mediterranean countries outside the EFNS.

But what would be such a brilliant congress without memorable social events? The opening ceremony was attended by more than 3000 participants in the "Grand Amphitheatre" of the Palais des Congres and allowed them to listen to an outstanding

piano recital given by the internationally known artist Pierre-Laurent Aimard (from Beethoven to Ligeti), and a special lecture given by Antonio Damasio on "Advances in the Neuroscience of Emotion". The gala evening at the Musée d'Orsay, as at previous congresses generously sponsored by Lundbeck, gave participants the opportunity to marvel at the famous French paintings of the 19th century with the kind help of charming English-speaking guides, then to savour delicious food and wines around the buffets, one of which had been judiciously located on the terrace on the last floor, with a splendid view on the river Seine and the Palais du Louvre. Finally, on behalf of the Local Organizing Committee, we wish to express our thanks to Lisa's team with its Vienna, Prague and Florence collaborators for the wonderful job, and to the EFNS' PCO, Kenes, and the local PCO, BCA, for the perfect organization of the congress. We also wish good luck to Athens, the congress city in 2005, and a great future to the coming EFNS congresses!

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