There is only one way to predict our future: in understanding our past and in realizing our present

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The future of any organisation relies on its culture, vision and strategic purpose.

ESSKA was founded in Berlin in 1982 (as an official body in 1984), dedicated to Arthroscopy and Knee Surgery, which was expanded to Sports Trauma some years later and more recently to Degenerative Knee. However, the identity and the main core of the mission have never changed. Today, as always, we “...bring together orthopaedic surgeons, clinicians and scientists in Europe; ESSKA raises the level of care in the field of orthopaedic sports medicine and degenerative joint diseases to improve musculoskeletal function and quality of life of patients. To achieve its mission, ESSKA supports education and research and aims to improve cooperation among its members, national and international societies in the field of prevention, diagnosis, treatment and surgery with special emphasis on arthroscopy”.

Europe has a vast and engaging history of diversity and integration that spans 47 countries, 27 of which form the European Union and 17 the Eurozone, with more than 800 million people. This diversity means different cultures and levels of education. It also means different habits and patient needs with complex social and political relationships. The increasing longevity, sports activities and trauma in our population, and the number of people with musculoskeletal diseases requiring our help have grown exponentially in recent years. As progress in scientific development continues, society increasingly demands a good quality of life. The bar set by society increases as the

years pass. Such patients need protection and help, and we must remain solid advocates of our patients.

We should address this reality by working with the EU and its political decision makers in order to improve the financial resources available for prevention, medical education and differentiated medical treatment in sports trauma and degenerative knee diseases with a special focus on eastern European countries; through sponsored fellowships, courses and combined meetings, we can achieve our goal. In order to accomplish this task, we wish to affiliate all European Societies of Knee Surgery, Sports Traumatology and Arthroscopy with ESSKA. We invite their leaders to become our representatives by establishing privileged partnerships and by offering special benefits to their members. Through these initiatives, we want to stimulate the scientific exchange in Europe and to create increasingly stable relationships. Unifying our strengths, sharing identical fundamental values and at the same time respecting our individual regional or national diversities will help to position ESSKA as the European umbrella society of choice in the fields of knee surgery, sports traumatology and arthroscopy.

The time is right to work together with EFORT-UEMS-EBOT in orthopaedics certification and re-certification, making contributions to the treatment of sports trauma and degenerative knee.

We are evaluating the advantages of creating an ESSKA Foundation in Luxembourg. Such an organisation could bring about an increase in sponsorship from industry and in extrapolating a more diverse revenue base, which is out of our scope presently. Developing a relationship with European institutions could also be profitable if they are convinced that investment in our specialty is cost effective, slowing down the progression of extremely common and potentially disabling diseases.

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In recent years, we developed a strategic plan for the future that will be updated this year with a medium-term vision. We changed our organigram, including the sections (EKA, AFAS and SS), to better accommodate the European leadership in these fields.

Our primary goal is education. We have a strong programme for the coming years with more than 70 sponsored fellowships/scholarships and available teaching centres and courses. We offer free books, current concepts booklets, DVDs, newsletters and the KSSTA journal to our members. We want them to immediately recognise the value of belonging to such an outstanding organisation, profiting from the congresses, expertise, connections, website, multicentre studies and office. We wish to improve our website with an eLearning platform to keep abreast of our younger stakeholders.

KSSTA is a recognised journal and we want to strengthen it to be one of the leading journals in the field of Knee Surgery, Sports Traumatology and Arthroscopy, thus increasing the impact factor. We have an impressive team

with a strong editorial board under the leadership of Jón Karlsson. The world continues to focus on electronic publishing so it is in our plans to launch an open access journal for Basic Research in Orthopaedic Sports Medicine. This journal will be free on the Internet and will cover basic science that is outside the scope of the KSSTA journal.

A path to sustainable development is never easy but it has been facilitated through the excellent work of the last presidencies, in which I was involved. Vigorous development in this organization has been achieved under the leadership of Karl Peter Benedetto, Neil Thomas, Daniel Fritschy, Lars Engebretsen and Niek van Dijk.

There are no secrets for success: they are commitment, ability, belief and persistence. The success of ESSKA should be our enthusiasm and drive. The strength of ESSKA depends on us: our board, sections, committees, office staff and members. The way we volunteer our time and effort will make the difference.

For my part, you can always count on me. Together, we can make it real.