

Editorial

For Strasbourg 2000 Or letter from the former to the new president

On Sunday December the 17th, you will start to act as president and will chair the 13th Strasbourg Intensive Course in Endoscopy. For once, history and geography will be united here, in Strasbourg. Strasbourg, the European capital, the seat of the European Parliament; Strasbourg, on the broder between France and Germany will also be the place where the former president will hand the relay over to the new president. Please be aware, Michael, that I did not say the relay between the old and the new generation because, Michael, the SMIER remains a meeting place for colleagues of all ages and nationalities.

What a long way we have come together, since that cold dawn in December 1987 when, for the first time, we climbed the steps of the European Parliament, under the leadership of the prophet Fernand Vicari. Thirteen years later, it is yet another palace that will welcome us for our course, still in Strasbourg, the mythic capital of this land of legend and friendship: the SMIER. Oh, sometimes we were not faithful to Strasbourg, but we were quick to return to her, not to part again. In the end, we feel at home here and I hope that, this year again, all the participants of this 13th course will feel at ease.

Our course has grown. Its growth has not always been easy, mostly during the first years, but our wilfulness and the unfailing help from our friends of the pharmaceutical industry and world of endoscopy helped us to overcome all obstacles. Acta Endoscopica has changed, too. With time, the journal became The European Review of Training in Endoscopy, its thematic issues more and more appraised. This change we thought about together with Paul Mainguet while drinking coffee during a joint meeting between the SMIER and the Romanian Society of Gastroenterology. Since, much water has flown under the bridges of the Danube. The journal of the Romanian Society of Gastroenterology, once written in two languages (like Acta Endoscopica), is now in English only but, don't tell... The SMIER is not a French-speaking society, nor the intensive course a French-speaking event since, this year, French, English and German will be the official languages. Using multiple languages is expensive, even very expensive. Thus, we have to restrict ourselves to languages that can be used as vehicles. Esperanto could have been the most appropriate language but unfortunately, and despite the efforts of my own grandfather, this universal language remains ignored by most. Should we thus give up? Absolutely not. We have to keep on working, ignoring those preaching in favor of English as the only solution.

Thus, Michael, at the dawn of this 3rd millenium, you have to grasp the torch and hold it high. In french, millenium means 'a piece of work made to last a thousand years'. This is the least I wish to the SMIER and to the Strasbourg Intensive Course.

You can be sure that the old crew will be there by your side, to pursue our common mission. I wish you, Michael, all the success that our society deserves.

I am looking forward to seeing you soon in Strasbourg, Mister President.

C. FLORENT

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