



# The Future of Hospitals and Healthcare



**Emeritus Professor Jacques MASSION, Belgium**

**President 1992 – 1995**

I am so happy to be here, as the oldest surviving Past-President of HOPE, and so grateful to our first lady President Mrs Sara Pupato FERRARI and to the second Secretary General Pascal GAREL for their kind invitation to celebrate with you our 50th anniversary in ROME.

First of all, I would like to tell you how grateful HOPE should be to our first full time Secretary General of our association: Kris SCHUTYSER, Professor at the Catholic University of LEUVEN. He was at the same time the key person of the association during 15 years with this double challenge to be: a remarkable « expert in Health and Hospital problems in Europe »- he is really a big Think Tank in that way- , and an extraordinary « organiser » with a permanent devotion to his duty in spite of some complaints for his absences from his charming and patient wife Goedele, here present. My predecessor Dr Frans VISSERS from the Netherlands and myself were very happy to sustain, and sometimes moderate, his creativity in his proposals of study topics or strategies and in the organisation of the Secretariat in offices given by the Rector of his university and with a skilled staff subsided by the Flemish region. Thank you so much, dear Kris, for such an investment in our association and for our faithful friendship.

Now, I would like to underline some memories of my presidency under three items: - Hope as a microcosm of Europa, - the need of hard study work to influence the European Institutions and - the Exchange programme so profitable for our young hospital managers.

1° We lived in HOPE an experience of Europe through our « microcosm» with the different national culture and health systems of the Member States, with the opening of our association to new Member States like Greece, Spain or Portugal (10th anniversary in Lisboa with Dr Juan Abreu in 1976), later on Denmark, Sweden and Finland, and some observer members like Switzerland. We also had to take into account the relative weight of big and small countries in internal elections or orientations.

Another aspect of this microcosm was the opportunity to meet a lot of strong European personalities and to work with a fantastic team under which I can only quote some persons like Peter Mac Quillam of the Department of Health in Ireland and President of the sub-committee Community Coordination in Dublin in 1978- Our meeting in Inverness in 1978 , where we didn't find the monster of Loch Ness, another one in 1987 in Winchester (GB) with our Danish lady president of the sub-committee and other members Ignacio Riesgo (SP) , Denis Doherty (Ir). During the visit of the old Holy Cross Hospital we were chased by a swarm of bees (or hornets !!). You see how we had to face some dangerous situations! We met Mr Rochaix, general inspector of



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the French ministry of health in the Journées latines in Rouen in 1991-, Enzo Coloiacomo in Roma, Brian Edwards (GB) in London and Gérard Vincent (FR) in Paris.

I would like to thank also the members of the Belgian delegation like Paul Tassin, Luce Oleffe, André Arnoud who was the precious financial advisor during years of our association and my brilliant old student and friend Willy Heuschen, here present, who is still the Secretary-general of the European Association of Hospital Managers.

Two last souvenirs. After the fall of the wall of Berlin, we held a Plenary assembly in Berlin in 1991 with Dr Muller, Head of the German delegation. We reached this memorable city by car, a large one, driven by the Secretary- General, with our wives and a staff member of the Committee and a mass of bags mainly books or papers to be distributed to the members. During this trip we crossed the ex-DDR and their poor villages and the river Elba on a small raft! Very hard and good journey! Last but not least the meeting in Stockholm-Helsinki in 1995 where I gave the Presidency to my successor Ignacio Riesgo.

2° - The members of HOPE were motivated to do a lot of study and scientific work to be able to influence the Commission and the European institutions in the direction of a separate Direction for Health in the Commission and a progressive uniformisation of the hospital systems and standards. So papers and books were edited or published like « Health Care Professions in the member states of the European Community- Education and training- Document of the Commission, 1985, the Special issue of Louvain Medical over » Hospital and the Europe of Health (vol. 109, n°7, September 1990), the Proceedings of Agora III about Europeans Citizens' Rights and Health of our meeting in Brussels (October 1995) or later the booklet over « Hospital and Health care Rationing in September 2000 by Win de Gooier.(ND). At the same time we were invited in several international Seminars in Europe and in Montréal or Bucharest.

In Europe, Spain was very active with Ignacio Riesgo for ex. in Oviedo (Asturias) in 1991, where we arrived, 3 or 4 members of HOPE, in the evening at the airport of Madrid, without any flight connection, and with a strike of the railways. We took a large cab which had a breakdown two hours later and a waiting time of two hours before his replacement. But at 9 am, after a very short night, I was opening the session with a lecture on the Rights of hospitalized children, as I had promised to my friend.

3° - The Exchange programme for young hospital managers became a real inspiration for HOPE as a specific initiative of our association. My best souvenir is the first Agora organised in Nantes in June 1988 by Georges Costargent, director of the 7 public hospitals of this city and very active in our association. I was accompanied by an assistant on the exchange program Mrs C. Boutsen in charge of the Internal audit in my teaching hospital Sint-Lucas in Brussels. I met there for the first time the brilliant assistant of Mr Costargent, who became our second Secretary-general: Pascal Garel. This program was really a hope programme for our association.

Thank you all for your presence and devotion to our association and my best wishes for its future.