Report from the President of the EDTA–ERA

Introduction

During the last year, our association has increased its scope of activities for a number of reasons: (i) the necessity of restructuring the Registry office and activities; (ii) the aim of maintaining and developing further the high standard of the journal of the association, *Nephrology Dialysis Transplantation*; (iii) the effort to stimulate mutually rewarding relations between the European scientific organisations involved in nephrology, transplantation, and hypertension; and (iv) our wish to continue to improve the scientific level of our congresses and meetings. Furthermore, (v), an effort has been made to improve contact with the national societies of Eastern Europe. In this respect, in May/June 1995, various organizations collaborated to organize in Moscow and St Petersburg in Russia and Tartu in Estonia, an update tour in Nephrology, which has previously been described in detail in *Nephrol Dial Transplant* 1995; 10: 2017. This successful initiative was the first educational course in which members of the International Society of Nephrology, the European Society of Pediatric Nephrology, the World Council on Renal Care, and of course EDTA–ERA cooperated to organize a well-balanced and stimulating scientific programme.

The EDTA–ERA Registry

The restructuring of the Registry, with the aim of improving its activity and scientific value, has taken a lot of time and thought. Large financial investments have been made to introduce the most modern technology, and to utilize the services of the most competent specialists in computing and epidemiology, so as to establish a basis of the highest standard possible. Moreover, during the summer a tremendous effort was made to compose a patient questionnaire which was acceptable to all national and regional registries. These innovations will enable and facilitate cooperation between the EDTA–ERA registry organization and the different national registries in Europe. Prof. Piccoli, with the help of Shalom Mendel, has coordinated the contacts with the different national and regional registries; and Prof. Fernando Valderrabano, the newly elected chairman of the scientific committee, has continuously supervised all these activities. A new scientific committee, including, as mentioned before, an expert in epidemiology and in computing science, was nominated by the council. The members are: Prof. F. Valderrabano (chairman), Spain; Prof. G. Tognoni (expert in epidemiology), Italy; Mr S. Mendel (expert in computers), Israel; Prof. G. Piccoli (representative of the council), Italy; Prof. F. Berthoux (representative of the council), France; Dr J. P. dos Santos, Portugal; Dr C. G. Elinder, Sweden; Dr D. Tsakiris, Greece; Dr Y. Vanrenterghem, Belgium; Dr K. L. Simpson, UK; Prof. O. Mehls (paediatric nephrology), Germany; and Dr S. Rigden (paediatric nephrology), UK. From the end of 1995, the new technologies and structure will be operational; and we hope that the Registry will continue to be a source of pride to our association. This oldest established Registry, which provides such an important framework for acquisition of knowledge and progress, is a unique example of a scientific activity organized by a supranational renal medical association. Without doubt the motivation now will be to satisfy and even surpass all expectations, in providing updated information and supporting prospective investigations. All those involved in this field will need to cooperate constructively, but we hope for and expect success at the ‘end of the tunnel’.

Cooperation with other societies

The council of EDTA–ERA, aware of the fact that a number of European organizations work in parallel in our field, tries therefore to stimulate collaboration of scientists, physicians, and all others involved in clinical and scientific activity in the field of nephrology in Europe. In so doing we hope that it will be possible to improve the interrelationships and the scientific level of European nephrology. We have to remember that keeping up with the tremendous progress and acquisition of knowledge is more and more difficult, particularly in a speciality necessitating updating in so many different fields, e.g. immunology, physiology, biochemistry, technology, all of which have an impact on clinical nephrology, transplantation, dialysis, hypertension, etc. To this end we strive to offer to the European nephrology community a yearly Congress, which will maintain an elevated and updated standard of information.

The Journal of the Association

This is also the ‘raison d’être’ of *Nephrology, Dialysis Transplantation*, the Journal of our Association. Eberhard Ritz has continued the work of the previous editor-in-chief, Sandy Davison, and has further stimulated the development and the diversification of *NDT*. The efforts to make expertise in diverse fields available to the Journal have facilitated the publication of an updated journal, presenting clinical investigations and reports as well as basic science studies in a clear and interesting way. The council, in complete consensus, has supported the development of the Journal, which
has become a leading publication in the field of nephrology. It must be the vehicle for written interaction between scientists and clinicians, between clinicians themselves, and between scientists themselves all over Europe. Continuous improvement will be necessary and constructive suggestions for this improvement are welcome. We have to be aware that excellence depends on the positive collaboration of each member of the association, who should feel a personal responsibility to improve, to stimulate and to raise new ideas.

The future

Such individual efforts, if applied to the Journal, the Congresses and the Registry, will serve to stimulate collective collaboration between centres, regions and nations. At a time when the former Soviet bloc has opened its doors, the scientists and intellectuals must be the leaders for collaboration, understanding, and tolerance. We hope that our association will continue to be an example of such an ideal and will be successful in its continuous efforts for unification.

Finally, modernization and changes in the organization of the administration of EDTA-ERA were necessary. A modernized constitution was approved in Athens. Our association will be named the ‘European Renal Association–European Dialysis and Transplant Association’ (ERA–EDTA). To avoid the risk of stagnation it has been voted that it will no longer be possible for a council member to be active for more than 9 years, and in the scientific committee of the Registry the term of office will be for 3 years, with the option of a 3-year extension at most. The rotation of officers will ensure vitalization, and thereby promotion of new initiatives, new criticism, and hopefully progress. The president of the association will be elected by the council from the past or present ordinary council members. In this way this position will continue to be held by a democratically elected officer.

In the coming years, collaboration between the EDTA–ERA and the EDTNA–ERCA will not be continued. Both organizations have decided to hold separate meetings. At the last meeting with the EDTNA–ERCA representatives in Athens, our council transmitted its best wishes for success in their future activities to EDTNA–ERCA. It was decided to maintain contact and evaluate in the future whether to organize common activities.

From 1996, ERA–EDTA will be a large association with varied branches of activity, a modernized constitution, and a modernized management. We hope that these marked changes which have taken place during the last 2½ years will be for the benefit of European nephrology.

J. Bernheim