

SIXTY YEARS OF A REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC GATHERING EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN NEUROLOGICAL AND PSYCHIATRIC FRONTIERS

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SUMMARY – In 2010, a major academic milestone was celebrated: 50 years since the inception of a conference series initiated through cooperation between neuropsychiatric institutions in Zagreb and Graz. This initiative, born during a time when neurology and psychiatry were still intertwined, gradually evolved alongside the disciplines themselves. The gatherings that began in a divided world—politically and ideologically—became a rare opportunity for East-West scientific dialogue, thanks to their neutral venue in former Yugoslavia. Boško Barac, one of the contributors to this account, became involved in these symposia in the 1960s and later took a central role in their organization following the unexpected death of the original Secretary General, Gerald Grinschgl. Over the next 23 years, Barac led the scientific committee, fostering ties with his Austrian counterpart, Helmut Lechner, and further shaping the program. In 2007, he passed the leadership to Vida Demarin. The symposia evolved from strictly neuropsychiatric events into forums that welcomed contributions from a wide range of related fields, both medical and non-medical. These cross-disciplinary discussions enriched the events, reinforcing their reputation not just as scientific conferences, but as platforms for broader humanistic reflection. Participants came from across Europe and beyond, fostering understanding between different traditions and schools of thought.

These meetings became known informally as the “Pula School,” a label that reflected their dual focus on scientific excellence and ethical responsibility. Topics often extended into emerging areas at the intersection of disciplines, and speakers addressed not only the function and dysfunction of the brain, but also questions concerning human behavior, cognition, and social responsibility. Importantly, these conferences also contributed to broader cultural and political dialogue. Held during an era of political rigidity, they served as a bridge between communities separated by ideology. The openness and cooperation they promoted helped lay groundwork for a more connected and tolerant European academic environment. The lasting significance of these meetings lies in their synthesis of knowledge and values. They highlighted how medicine, while rooted in biological sciences, must ultimately serve the human condition. In this spirit, the symposia became more than academic exchanges — they were a testament to the power of shared knowledge in fostering peace, understanding, and progress across borders and disciplines.

Key words: *International Neuropsychiatric Pula Congresses (INPC); Neuropsychiatry – history; Croatia; Neurology; Psychiatry; Neurosurgery; Neuropsychology; Cooperative behavior; International scientific collaboration; Mind-body relations, metaphysical*

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Sixth Decade of the International Neuropsychiatric Pula Congresses

The 50-year jubilee of this international meeting with continuing maintenance of these noble goals of studies in the most developed nations meant a big success for countries with lasting scientific, medical and cultural background; for Croatia, a small and not rich country, with significant support from Croatian institutions and close collaboration with colleagues and institutions from the County of Styria and the Republic of Austria, the International Neuropsychiatric Pula Congresses certainly presented quite a unique phenomenon. The continuation of this tradition to the sixth decade of the meeting supports our belief in good perspectives of these meetings, with their specific, distinctive traits.

Originating from a small gathering of neuropsychiatrists, mostly from Zagreb and Graz, in 1961, based on traditional collaboration between Graz and Zagreb, Austrian and Croatian medicine, they had evolved into a respectable international meeting greatly surpassing the significance of the two disciplines, neurology and psychiatry. Inaugurated in the 'cold-war' times, they have reached the high professional, scientific and humanistic growth, overcoming many difficulties and obstacles. They enabled contacts between the then divided parts of Europe, fostering the ideas of mutual understanding and collaboration, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration among nowadays independent disciplines neurology, psychiatry and neurosurgery, with borderline medical and non-medical disciplines (psychology, social sciences, etc.), reflecting scientific and professional advances in medicine.

We accentuate the three main peculiarities of these meetings:

- 1) high level of scientific and clinical contributions to the neuropsychiatric themes, in both neurology and psychiatry, now independent disciplines, covering specifically borderline fields between them. Such presentations were delivered by the leading speakers, basic scientists and clinicians, covering various disciplines, inciting new investigations and encouraging good clinical practice in the participating countries;
- 2) rich exchange of experience through discussions between eminent speakers and participants from

the region and the world initiated new types of investigations;

- 3) fruitful contacts of participants on a broad international basis, in the times of Europe being divided by the 'iron curtain', Pula meetings enabled personal contacts of scientists and clinicians from both political 'blocs'.

Many factors contributed to the successful development of these meetings, starting with hardly sixty participants in 1961 as a small Weekend Symposium, achieving the number of more than 500 colleagues in the years before Grinschgl's sudden death in 1984 and 1000 active participants in the years 1988-1990. That was the result of the early initiators' and their followers' activities, propagating collaboration between the West and East. We feel our obligation to evaluate the significance of the scientific scope, professional achievements, social significance and didactic results in international relations, specifically of their impact on health services in the South East European region, from where most participants were coming, in order to plan our future activities.

An answer should also be given regarding the attained scientific, practical medical, and social humanistic impacts, as well as their potentials for the future. Barac belongs to the early participants at the Pula meetings: active participant from 1966, later partaking with increasing responsibilities in the organization: deputy of Professor Lopašić at consultations in Graz from 1967, Secretary of the Regional Office at Rebro Department of Neurology (Zagreb), Kuratorium member from 1974, INPC Secretary General with Helmut Lechner (1985-2007), and Kuratorium Honorary President from 2007. For this reason, he was nominated by the INPC Kuratorium as Co-Editor with Kuratorium member Vida Demarin for editing the Fifty-Year Memorial Book¹ for the Jubilee Congress (2010). Both authors feel obliged to thank the friends and colleagues with whom we collaborated for many decades in this commitment. For the present review, we utilized this Memorial Book, Programs, Abstract Books and Proceedings of many years, and other documents², and extensive reports on the Pula congresses published earlier³.

A peculiar mark of these meetings was a decision to make them a common scientific project of the Graz and Zagreb University Neuropsychiatric

Departments, brought ten years after the fortuitous encounter of the Zagreb and Graz neuropsychiatrists Rosenzweig and Grinschgl, in Kopenhagen in 1951. Assistant Professor Gerald Grinschgl was certainly a person to whom most of the credits for the creation and development of the Pula conferences go: with features of his personality, his humanistic education and diplomatic gifts, he systematically, resolutely and determinedly, sometimes even 'behind the curtains', directed many actions, so that the Pula meetings have evolved into an important international early congress with specific purposes and qualities. As Professor Ganner told in his Commemoration to Grinschgl⁴, he was a true '*zónpolitícón*', able to achieve his goals in the best possible way, uniting different people, then also politicians of the times, to the common intentions. Grinschgl was very aware of his own achievements seen in his written retrospection of the meetings, four years before his unexpected death:

"Twenty years of the Pula Symposia delineate a long portion in fast developments of modern medicine. They also provided evidence that it is possible, in our times as well, to achieve fruitful and successful scientific results with partners of various languages, various countries and regions and of different socio-political orientations. Whatever the direction the Pula Symposia may evolve in the future, their progress so far is worth so much they deserve to stay preserved for the coming times".

The crucial antecedent of the Pula meetings was the encounter of the two young neuropsychiatrists in the break of the Conference on Poliomyelitis, then actual neurological disease. Described much later by Grinschgl, it was destiny: without it, there would have been no Pula meetings:

"For six years after the end of the war, Europe's countries were still separated from each other by limitations of travel, visa requirements and currency restrictions. The need, indeed the necessity, to cross over national borders for international contacts, precisely in the sciences and particularly in the field of medicine, increased. So it happened that on September 6, 1951, the representatives of two Central European countries met during a break at the 2nd International Poliomyelitis Conference in Copenhagen. The then young assistant at Graz Neuropsychiatric Department, Dr. Grinschgl, was approached by a young man whose

name badge read "Dr. Rosenzweig, Zagreb, Yugoslavia". Pointing to his badge, he indicated that they should have kept together as representatives of small countries, indeed also as neighbors; it was the perfect moment to embark on a new era in medical and scientific relationships between Austria and Yugoslavia. That moment ranks, in retrospect, as the beginning of later intensive neuropsychiatric relations between the two countries, symbolizing, to some extent, also the moment of the 'conception' of the Neuropsychiatric Symposia in Pula. Their 'birth', however, was thereafter preceded by a 'pregnancy' lasting for almost ten years"⁵.

The personalities of Gerald Grinschgl and Arnulf Rosenzweig and their accidental encounter were indeed crucial for later development of the Pula meetings, unique in Europe, where professionals from the two 'blocs' could meet and speak freely. Therefore, Arnulf Rosenzweig⁶ should be regarded a true initiator of contacts leading to the Pula meetings. A Croatian Jew, participant of the antifascist movement, a democratic and liberal intellectual, nice gentleman and friendly man, an eminent Croatian neurologist and teacher, went first on the idea of collaboration with the former 'enemy' country. Grinschgl, on the other hand, an Austrian arrested and prosecuted during the Nazi occupation, collaborating in the resistance movement with the later Austrian Foreign Minister and Austrian Ambassador in the USA, Karl Gruber, immediately accepted Rosenzweig's proposal for collaboration between the Graz and Zagreb University Departments. Such collaboration with a 'winner country' from the South-East Europe, organized when Austria was still under control of the World War II winners' army, was a proof of the Austrian anti-Nazi policy. General political situation in Yugoslavia after the break between Tito and Stalin in 1949, made such collaboration possible and even desirable from both sides. Younger generations, frustrated by the World War II and postwar difficulties, both in Austria and in then Yugoslavia, accepted these contacts, important for the future of Europe. It was necessary that both heads of the Departments, Lopašić and Bertha, supported this cooperation, taking official responsibility for it. Mutual scientific exchanges were organized between the neuropsychiatrists from the Graz and Zagreb Departments, with friendly arrangements in times of 'limita-

tions of travel, visa requirements and currency restrictions'. Scientific lectures and joint projects enriched this exchange programs. Blažević and Grinschgl attended the First Congress of Yugoslav Neuropsychiatrists in Novi Sad (1962) to present their common experimental work^{2,3,6,7}. Grinschgl described the Novi Sad Congress as follows:

"It was then that I got to know the outstanding men and women who formed the leading group in our discipline in Yugoslavia: Vujić, Ristić, Gospavić from Belgrade, Niketić from Skopje, Kanoni and Marinčić from Ljubljana, Lopašić and Julius from Zagreb, to name but some of them. I can still remember the enthusiasm with which the presentations were received at the Congress: an overwhelming need to absorb new discoveries and take in the experiences of others ..."⁵.

Grinschgl's sentence outspoken in 1980, that ten years were needed from the Copenhagen encounter (1951), "... the 'moment of conception' of the Symposium – to their 'birth'" (1961): the 'pregnancy' lasted for ten years, symbolized in the eloquent way the complex political circumstances of the time in Europe, including Croatia, Yugoslavia and Austria. The First Symposium in 1961 was announced as the Wochenend-Symposium of the Graz University Neuropsychiatric Society (Neuropsychiatrische Gesellschaft an der Universität Graz). Even the lecture given by Professor Lopašić, the highest representative of the host country, was announced as 'Guestlecture' (*Gastvorlesung*)⁷. In fact, it was a meeting of Graz neuropsychiatrists in Yugoslavia (Croatia), to which their Zagreb, Rijeka and Pula colleagues were invited to participate with colleagues from Graz and only one from Germany, Prof. Werner Scheid (Köln), the leading German neurologist in the postwar years, the author of the famous German neurology textbook with many consecutive editions^{8,9}. For this reason, the Austrian Consul General in Zagreb, Dr. Dengler, had to be present, continuing this function until the year 1974. In this way, the meeting gained step by step an international scent only later, but Grinschgl probably had such plans from the very beginning. With such organization, the meetings were not 'illegal'; on the contrary, they were 'unofficially' permitted by the then responsible Croatian political structures^{1,3}.

The 3rd Symposium was still organized by the Graz University Neuropsychiatric Society in collaboration

with the Yugoslav Association of Neuropsychiatrists, but its President gave his address at the Opening Ceremony. In the Organizers' Address published in the Program, the Secretary of the Society Grinschgl greets "the common scientific work with Yugoslav colleagues from all parts of their beautiful country"⁷. In the published scientific programs of the first five symposia, besides the names of the organizers, the names of the recognized neurologists and psychiatrists from the republics of the whole host country (Yugoslavia) were added: Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia. In October 1963, Grinschgl organized a meeting of the representatives of the Pula participants on the Bled Lake (Slovenia) in order to put a new basis for future organization of the Pula meetings. According to the old Austrian tradition, the elected Organizing Scientific Committee was entitled Kuratorium (Lat. *cura* = care). Among the first eight elected Kuratorium members was also Werner Scheid, eminent German neurologist. The growth of the meeting continued in the next years with new participants from various parts of Europe (Greece, Hungary, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany, Bulgaria, Turkey, etc.). There were ample possibilities for discussions at the sessions or outside the conference hall.

While growing and changing their character, the Symposia were changing their name: finally, after 44 years of successful work, achieving high scientific and professional levels, the Kuratorium decided unanimously at its autumn meeting in Abano (2004), to rename the scientific Pula conferences to International Neuropsychiatric Pula Congresses, due to their high-level organization, eminent lecturers and actual themes, presenting recent advances in neurology and psychiatry, treating systematically the borderland problems of neurology and psychiatry, and securing their unique character and function^{2,3,7,8}.

Throughout the past 50 years, the Pula meetings have had good support and understanding from Croatian institutions and official personalities, in spite of some attempts of political diversions. The Executive Council of the Croatian Parliament (afterwards the government of the Republic of Croatia) was always officially functioning as High Protector (in Croatian, *Pokrovitelj*) of the meetings from the 20th Symposium in 1980^{2,3,8}. Since then, President of the Republic of

Croatia, the highest representative of the host country, has always acted as the High Protector.

Sudden death of Gerald Grinschgl was a shock. However, both the Program and the Summary Book were finished on time, with great job and help by his widow, Mrs. Traude Grinschgl, and in cooperation with the late Professors Stochdorph and Barac as editors of the 25th Summary Book. So the 25th Symposium was held under normal conditions. Grinschgl's friend and admirer, Professor Ganner, described his life and scientific work. He ended with thoughts reflecting everybody's feeling: "It goes without saying that we all preserve faithful memories of the late Gerald Grinschgl, going well beyond the mystery of death"⁴.

A decision was made to continue the Pula meetings on the foundations built together with Grinschgl. Professor Helmut Lechner, head of the Graz University Neuropsychiatry Department, a world recognized investigator in the field of cerebrovascular diseases and clinical neurophysiology, was unanimously accepted, together with Barac, as Co-Secretaries General of the Kuratorium, with offices in Graz and Zagreb. The new Co-Secretaries understood their primary responsibility to organize appropriate connections with European scientific centers in the East and West, with the Republics of Yugoslav Federation and the neighboring countries. At the same time, English language was introduced as the official congress language without simultaneous translation. It was necessary to introduce the review procedure for the scientific contributions, organized by the Zagreb Secretary General, sent for reviewing to the Kuratorium members. The Kuratorium accepted the rules for preparing invited introductory and academic lectures, prepared for the Proceedings as a type of Review or Critical Review papers. Strict rules were also established and published for acceptance of submitted abstracts of scientific contributions. Many eminent speakers were invited to enrich the Pula programs with their expositions of specific topics within the mainstream of the Pula INPS/INPC interests.

Lechner and Barac, consulting the Kuratorium, introduced new, modern ways of preparing the Proceedings with extensive texts of the invited introductory and academic lectures, written by eminent speakers, also useful for postgraduate education, analogous

to didactic texts of the American Academy of Neurology. In 1992, the web sites of Pula Symposia were introduced with information on future program, with the invited papers, academic, introductory lectures and summaries of accepted scientific contributions, and a choice of photos from the working and social parts of the Congresses.

During the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the active participants from Croatia and other countries of the former Yugoslavia were freed from paying the fees, arranged by Lechner with the Austrian sponsors financing the Symposia.

On March 27, 2006, we received a new unexpected blow of destiny; our friend, worldwide renowned clinician and scientist, my Austrian partner Secretary General, Helmut Lechner, suddenly died after long illness, when we hoped he conquered the serious disease with which he had been fighting for years. The Commemoration for General Secretary Lechner was organized during Opening Ceremony of the 46th Congress¹⁰.

Analyzing the Programs during the 50 years^{8,11,12}, we see confirmation of the basic principles of our meetings, continuously improved and updated according to advances in medicine, particularly in neurology and psychiatry, taking care of the social functions of both disciplines, neurology and psychiatry. I would like to mention only some of the then actual topics presented either in the Main Themes or Academic Lectures:

1962-1965: Psychiatry and Arts was a topic of four Symposia

1963: Somatically founded psychoses or neuroses

1966: Possibilities and limits of special diagnostics and management procedures; Driving license in epileptic patients

1968: Psychiatric patient in changes of times; Psychiatrist's professional secrecy

1969: Neurological and psychiatric aspects of head trauma; Legal problems in psychiatry: admission, management and discharge from hospital

1972: Management of psychopathologic syndromes in the aged

1973: Cerebral fits (epileptic and nonepileptic)

1974: Intensive and emergency neurology and psychiatry

- 1975: So-called 'Involution psychoses'
 1977: Rehabilitation in neurology
 1979: Neuropsychiatric indications for pregnancy interruption and sterilization; Neuropsychiatric problems in the aged
 1982: Dementia syndromes
 1984: Paroxysms in neurology and psychiatry
 1985: Recent developments in neurology; Recent developments in psychiatry; Actual situation of neurology in research and practice
 1986: Psychogeriatrics; Therapy of CVD
 1987: Application of new technologies in neurology; Current trends in diagnostics and therapy of depressive diseases

The same we can see also in the rest of the academic lectures of Pula conferences¹².

We shall mention some of the invited speakers in the period between the 26th and 50th INPC in alphabetical order: Antončić, Arko, Arseni, Barac, Van den Bergh, Beus, Birkmayer, Bokonjić, Brainin, Brenner, Bresser, Bumbaširević, Chrast, Ćuk, Deisenhammer, Demarin, Dietze, Dimitrijević, Fališevac, Femenić, Ferković, Fieschi, Fontanari, Franjić, Gospavić, Gostl, Grbeša, Haasz A and I, Hager, Hamel-Puškarić, Hlavka, Horanyi, Hrastnik, Ignjatović, Ivačić-Bohaček, Iveković, Jakovljević, Janković, Jekić, Jurinović, Kazner, Kielholz, Klun, Kugler, Kožić, Kryžanowski, Kulčar, Kunz, Ledinski, Ledić, Lević, Loga, Lupret, Maglajlić, Mandić, Maretić, Marguth, Marković, Matković, Milekić, Milohanić, Muačević, Munding, Nadj-Koša, Nazor, Ocić, Orovčanec, Pappageorgiou, Pateiski, Paunović, Poljaković, Popović, Povše, Pöldinger, Pražić, Rakić, Reić, Rogina, Rosenzweig, Rimpl, Sartorius, Sayk, Seitzberger, Sekulović, Schergna, Sepčić, Siegfried, Simkó, Sisek, Stula, Štainfl, Štampalija, Šubić, Šugar, Šurdonja, Vodopija, Weiner, Zec, Žagar, Žele, and Župić.

Having in mind the scientific development and the specific character of the Pula meetings, international achievements and social atmosphere present at the meetings, we have to remind of the early pioneers of the Pula Symposia: Rosenzweig, Grinschgl, Lopašić, Bertha, Scheid, Dogan, Marguth, Lampar, Paal, Peršić, but also the guests of the meetings: Dr. Dengler, the Lord Mayors of Graz and Pula, other high

representatives of public and social life of the guest and all participating countries, giving support to both scientific and social-humanistic facets of these meetings. Such thoughts, even when fragmentary spoken, then and continuously later, as well as now, many have defined these meetings, nearly from the beginning, as 'the Pula School of Science and Humanism' (*Die Pula Schule der Wissenschaft und Humanismus*), entitled so by President Wegart, Primarius Dr. Gerd Stepantschitz, Grinschgl, Lechner, Ristić, Huber, Neundörfer, Laner, Lević, Loga, Vodusek, and Demarin^{2,3,8}. Eminent colleagues, our Kuratorium members and honorary members gave their short reminiscences and evaluations of the INPS/INPC in the last two and half decades. Professor Bernhard Neundörfer, honorary INPC Kuratorium member, for many years organizer of the neurological themes, resumes the meaning of the Pula meetings in his way:

"What is now the fascination of the Pula Congresses and what renders them nearly unmistakable for a neurologist in his function of the author and at the same time the Program organizer of neurological themes (mostly with Professor David Vodusek), these meetings intended to bring together Neurology and Psychiatry from the very beginning at their foundation in 1961, represented academically by a joint chair of Neuropsychiatry in many places (like in Graz and Zagreb). In most European countries, Neurology and Psychiatry were finally separated in the seventies and eighties of the past century, developing further new subspecialties in each of them. Nevertheless, it was regarded by many academic and practical neurologists and psychiatrists that it was still essential that both subjects, neurosurgery included, co-operate, as they work scientifically with the same basic matter: the brain and the central nervous system, using often the same modern research and diagnostic methods (neuroimaging, electrophysiology, biochemistry, molecular genetics, morphology, etc.). The Pula Congresses have offered therefore the ideal and extremely rare stage, apart from the South East European Society for Neurology and Psychiatry Congresses in Thessaloniki (Greece), or, the rich in tradition Baden-Baden touring meetings, limited however to Germany. The core of the Congresses have been Main Themes, dealing with Neurology as well as Psychiatry, partly including Neurosurgery, treated in common bigger

intersections ... The central 'Main Topics' with 5-8 main lectures by internationally recognized research scientists, mostly from participating countries (Austria, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Poland, Czech, Slovakia, and Hungary) were accompanied alternatively by Workshops, Postgraduate Courses (in English, German or Croatian), Satellite Symposia, Academic Lectures and Lunch-Meetings. The titles of the topics were: Errors in Neurology and Psychiatry; Bridges between Neurology and Psychiatry; Social Aspects in Neurology and Psychiatry, with special reference to the brilliant Academic Lecture by Amos Korczyn within the series Errors in Neurology and Psychiatry (2008), entitled *Where is the Pain in the Brain?*¹¹.

Neundörfer answered the most important question: Have the Pula Symposia, recently Congresses, met the criteria of bridging Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry? I definitely think 'yes'. This can be proved in many respects. In the past, the topics were discussed and decided at two annual meetings of the Kuratorium members, together with the Secretary General, so that already at the organizational level profound talks took place among the colleagues from Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry. Besides, again and again certain topics were jointly discussed, e.g., Cognitive Disorders in 1988, Vertigo and Disturbances of Balance in 1989, Diseases in Older Age in 1990, Rehabilitation in Neurology and Psychiatry in 1991, Psychosomatics of Headache in 1992, Aging and Coping Mechanisms in 1993, Advances and Genetics in Neurology and Psychiatry in 1994, Costs and Benefits in Neurology and Psychiatry and Pain in Neurology and Psychiatry in 1996, Gender Differences in Neurology and Psychiatry in 2001, Neurological and Psychiatric Aspects of Movement Disorders in 2003, New Therapeutic Trends in Psychiatry and Neurology in 2004, Neuroimaging in Neurology and Psychiatry in 2005, and New Developments in Psychiatry and Neurology in 2006. Neundörfer's final sentences read as follows: "If the newly elected Secretary-General, Prof. Vida Demarin from Zagreb, will follow those principles as described before in the future, which already happened in 2008 and 2009, the prosperous outlook and the best scientific and professional future of the International Neuropsychiatric Pula Congresses is guaranteed"¹¹.

The Kuratorium member Slobodan Loga, Professor of Psychiatry in Sarajevo, eminent member of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, analyzing the participation of neurologists and psychiatrists from Bosnia and Herzegovina, wrote:

"Today without any doubt we may say that the INPC presents an inevitable professional and educational institution for all neurologists and psychiatrists seriously involved in this medical field. Reputation of lecturers, selections of actual topics, fruitful and constructive discussions are aspects why INPC attracted attention of young, perspective neurologists and psychiatrists in Bosnia and Herzegovina", concluding: "Five decades of work, previously International Neuropsychiatric Pula Symposium (INPS), since the 2005 International Neuropsychiatric Pula Congress (INPC), left deep trace in the professional and scientific work of neurologists and psychiatrists in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Excellently created, it always led to achieve an aim for getting greater and advanced knowledge for participants and for the benefits of patients. Exchange of experience is one of the most awarding work methods of INPC".

On many occasions we expressed our thanks to all lecturers, eminent scientists from Europe, distant and neighboring, for giving lectures and for preparing their papers for publication in the Proceedings. Specifically we have to give our cordial friendly and sincere thanks for collaborating in the Jubilee Memorial Book¹, commemorating our common deeds and eminent personalities in the past: Battistin, Bechter, Gross, Hotujac, Huber, Kostić, Kugler, Lanner, Loga, Marković, Muačević, Neundörfer, Niederkorn, Pogačnik, Sinanović, Trkanjec, Vodušek, Wender, Barac and Demarin, memorizing also our active friends from Serbia: Lević and Paunović.

Honoring all speakers, participants and guests, we have to mention one of our dear friends who left us after preparing his last lecture in Pula (49th Congress, 2009), the eminent German neuropsychiatrist and clinical neurophysiologist Professor Hans Helmut Kornhuber, inventor of the 'readiness potentials' (*Bereitschafts Potentiale*). In his valuable paper entitled Human Freedom and the Brain, presented due to his illness by Professor Bechter at the Opening Ceremony of the 49th INPC, he discussed the bases of philosophical and neurobiological approaches to this great-

est question of humans, from ancient civilizations to our days. He insisted that human freedom, coming from the human brain mechanisms, is a unique phenomenon in the world, recognized as the ability of human individuum to make free choice of one, among several possibilities:

“Man is born for freedom of the will – but he must develop it”. Human freedom is “the highest ability of man, more than speech or his intelligence: it is the comprehensive virtue to make life worth living by doing good deeds and finding happiness of meaning”. It is “never complete, always in danger but we can and must do something for it ... helping one another”. “There is, independently of the class, the human nobility that comes from long good will. But we should behave worthy of this high gift and not abuse it to ruin the beauty of Earth”. His scientific, philosophical and moral messages were deeply inherent in the traditions of the Pula School of Science and Humanism^{1,12}.

The Future of the Pula Meetings

The Pula meetings are the best example of interdisciplinary collaboration in the field of neurology and psychiatry, originating from the same scientific and cultural roots on the territories of Central and South-East Europe, and giving new perspectives for more intensive scientific and professional collaboration and for international postgraduate education, with lecturing scientists throughout the world. The scientific and humanistic mission of the Pula Congresses is dealing with the changing position and connected problems in neurology and psychiatry. The two disciplines have become extremely important for modern medicine in the last decades, in view of fast advances in basic neurosciences and rapid progress of medical technology, especially in such delicate matters such as investigations of the human brain, the organ of human mind. During the second half of the 20th century, the two disciplines developed as independent scientific and practical medical disciplines, with a number of subspecialties and their particular methodologies and technologies (e.g., neuropsychology, neurology of behavior). This enabled revolutionary changes in the concept of many neurological and psychiatric diseases or disorders, with new possibilities in the diagnostics, management, restoration of function and prevention, with new advances in other collaborating disciplines.

In a paper with our Austrian collaborator Kurt Niederkorn, Vida Demarin, the co-author of this paper, stressed these ideas in their contribution¹⁴, expressing the firm assurance for the future of these international meetings with their traditional venue on the Croatian soil. In their sixth decade, the INPC continue the confirmed mission for the forthcoming years, conferring hope to people, healthy and ill, for happy living in the next centuries, in spite of all menaces appearing to destroy the human civilization and even the life on our Earth. The Croatian participants and organizers may be proud of their contributions to this international project.

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