



Annual report at the AGM in Rheinsberg on 16th June 2018

After having considered it carefully I decided to be nominated to the Board of Directors at EPU's AGM 24th June 2017. I was elected together with Paul Neuhaus, Germany and David Mitchell, UK. At the same time Philip Rendtorff stood down from the board as the Danish representative. He remains in the Board as a special advisor. At the Board meeting the next day the Board elected me as the new President of EPU. The other Board members are John McFarlane, Ireland, Daniel Peltzer, Belgium, Margret Embry, France, Erika Gehrig, Switzerland, and Stefan Grajcar, Slovakia.

As EPU was quite new to me I have spent the past year to be acquainted with the procedures, contacts etc. The Board members have been very supportive, and I really appreciate the cooperation with them. They are fantastic people, and they work very hard for EPU and the polio survivors. They are extremely committed and competent, and they have taken upon them a lot of tasks. I am very grateful to know that I can rely on their assistance whenever I need it.

It is very important that EPU continues spreading the knowledge of polio and post polio syndrome. The knowledge must not disappear. It is therefore necessary that the EPU is visible as an active organization with an agenda which is relevant to politicians, health professionals as well as for our members and all polio survivors. Polio is almost eradicated, but what about the millions of polio survivors who are facing problems with post polio syndrome. Who will take care of them and will they get the necessary medical treatment? I know that EPU's Board members work very hard both nationally and internationally to raise awareness. They participate in many meetings in order to make EPU known as an organization dealing with polio and post polio issues. However, EPU member organizations must also help to spread the knowledge. We know that Central and Eastern Europe countries need to be supported, but how can we do it? We have sent an invitation letter to join the EPU to organizations in Croatia, Estonia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia and

Herzegovina. Regrettably only Croatia has responded so far, but that will not prevent us from trying again. The more organizations and countries we are, the stronger we will be. Right now EPU has 31 member organizations from 20 countries, and that is quite impressive numbers.

The AGM gives us a unique opportunity to meet and share our experience. I have been looking forward to meeting you all. I am sure that we can learn from each other, and the EPU needs input from all our member organizations. It is important that we are networking. A cross-border cooperation is a good idea. It makes it possible for us to take advantage of each other's experience. The problems with post polio syndrome are the same wherever in Europe or any other place you live. Post polio syndrome must be recognized everywhere.

We have had two Board meetings, one on 25th of June 2017 in Lobbach and one on 2nd of February 2018 in Paris. Moreover we have had ten telephone conferences. In Paris we discussed the future of EPU. The organization has some challenges to deal with. One challenge is the ageing and progressively reduced mobility of polio survivors. Another challenge is the lack of funds to support EPU's activities.

At the AGM in Lobbach John told us about the PoPSyCLE project. It is a fantastic project, and it will change everything for the polio survivors. We do not know yet what time will bring, but EPU will be very positive and supportive to the project.

Early this year EPU issued Newsletter No 1. 2018. Margret had worked very hard with gathering materials for the Newsletter. We are very grateful to Margret for all her efforts. If you have anything for the future Newsletters, you are very welcome to contact Margret. She will appreciate receiving stuff from you.

It has been a very interesting year with a lot of good discussions in the Board, and I look forward to the coming year. One of the important issues is to continue our discussions about the future of EPU, but it is also necessary to discuss a Social Media strategy. We can assure you that we will work very hard. However, we will need inputs from you, our member organizations. Together we can make a difference.

Rheinsberg 16th June 2018

Gurli Nielsen – President of EPU