

Dear readers,

We are pleased to introduce a new section entitled *Society Communications*. After two years of continuous contribution, Professor Peter Ell decided to cease as Section Editor of News and Views. I take this opportunity to thank Professor Peter Ell for the superb job he did in editing News and Views during this period. We will certainly miss Professor Ell's clever comments, thoughts and vision. As from today, *Society Communications* will bring together the contents of the old

Blue Pages, with the developments concerning the EANM, and the news that are relevant to the entire field. The section will be coordinated and edited by Professor Adil Al-Nahas, Secretary of the EANM. We hope you will enjoy reading Society Communications!.

Ignasi Carrió
Editor-in-Chief

"Society communications welcomes"

Information on:

- New Products,
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On Turkey and Greece and the EANM banner

During the closing ceremony of the annual meeting of the EANM in Istanbul, on Wednesday, October 19, 2005, an event with a 'historical' dimension took place. What happened? A cheering audience of about 2,000 scientists clapped and laughed at the handing over of the EANM banner from Hatice Durak, the Istanbul congress president 2005, to Georgios Limouris, the Athens congress president 2006! And both of the congress presidents laughed heartily as well! The ubiquitous joyous emotion was palpable. This beautiful moment had a truly symbolic dimension. Who would have dared to imagine such a situation some years ago: the Turks passing over a banner to the Greeks and the audience cheering? Who would not know that relations between Greece and Turkey over recent decades and, indeed, centuries, have not always been characterised by tender friendship? The EANM assembly, however, had the privilege of witnessing a small Turkish-Greek event without grief or strife. This was great and important, and in its own way a peace-building moment.

How did this come about? Both Hatice Durak and Georgios Limouris, as well as their colleagues from the two national societies of nuclear medicine, had consciously and unconsciously prepared for the moment and allowed it to happen. In anticipation of the 2006 meeting in Athens, and as an advance welcoming gesture, Limouris and the Greek Association of Nuclear Medicine had offered a magnificent recital of ancient Byzantine music in the St. Irene Chapel in Istanbul, close to the Sultan's Topkapi palace, 2 days previously. This ancient Byzantine church from the ninth century had served as a storing place for weapons and other items during the Islamic Ottoman period, from 1453 until after the departure of the Sultan's family. For about 550 years, no Orthodox religious ceremony had taken place in the church. The EANM assembly in the chapel on October 17, 2005, however, had been granted permission for such a historical event, in the presence of His Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, head of the Orthodox Church in Turkey.

Happiness and joy surrounded the grateful Greek attendants. Their emotion was transmitted to their Turkish and multinational guests.

For her part, Hatice Durak had taken the innovative action during the opening ceremony of standing in front of the assembly to make her opening speech, not 'protecting' herself behind a podium. Her words of welcome and of hospitality were thus rendered more profound and convincing. The innovative communication continued during her closing remarks, which were full of humour, irony and self-deprecation. The appreciative audience laughed and laughed. Relaxation grew as the time to hand over the banner approached. The final climax was due to the fact that the banner was unfolded and handed over upside down!

We have lived through symbolic peace-building moments which we shall not forget. Our hope is that other multinational groups in Greece and Turkey might experience similar exchanges of humour. Even if, within a medical assembly, the scientific exchange is the most important form of interaction, we should also be aware of the impact of humanistic, emotional and symbolic aspects of communication. Are we moving towards a change of minds? Is the EANM contributing in modelling the shape of the future European Union?



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