This is how European Phoniaticrians praised their association a quarter of a century ago.

- Among them Duško Cvejić from Belgrade, one of the founders.

Jürgen Wendler
XXVI\textsuperscript{th} UEP-Congress, Lund, May 12-14, 2011
To-day, we will look back at a history of 40 years.
The primary idea came from Gerhard Kittel from Erlangen and it was

- Peter Biesalski from Mainz who took over and started campaigning untirelessly to make this idea a reality.

Looking for likewise enthusiastic allies, he was, in particular, out for polyglot talents as well as for colleagues with useful connections to East-Bloc countries, mainly to the Soviet Union, strongly controlling all of them.
Thus, he arrived at Oskar Schindler from Torino - and Dušan Cvejić from Belgrade,
and here we have the four ones who are, in fact, the founders of the UEP.

- Cvejić invited to a first come together to Belgrade in 1971,

- and 48 phoniaticians from 14 countries attended.

After long lasting and rather controversial discussion, finally, a first approximation to the formation of a new international association was achieved.

- they called themselves Union of the European Phoniaticians.
  - A great success.
I am going to follow their way according to the data of the Annual Bulletin which I edited from 1983 through 1992 during my turns as Secretary General.

- The data comprise basic information about the congresses from 1971 to 1991

- statistic numbers as well as results and decisions

- and strategic activities of Board and General Secretary Office.

The next important meeting took place in Prague, the post war phoniatric Mekka, in 1973
- under the honorary presidency of Miloslav Seeman and with Eva Sedláčková as president. Nearly hopeless controversial discussion broke out.
These were the main controversies, hot issues having continued to be subjects to heated debate over the years, in parts, up until to-day:
- The profile of the organization: professional or scientific or both?
- The target: independent specialty of its own standing as the only option or subspecialty, under special conditions, as a temporary or permanent alternative?

- East - West:
Fundamental socio-political differences between the East and the West were reflected in their corresponding medical care systems and caused a lot of controversies just by lack of knowledge and mutual information. All of us had to learn many lessons. It was a painful process, but, we made it.
- And a crucial issue: currency problems.
Strategic Groupings
Fundis, hawks
Realos, doves

Crisis!

As it is true for many societies and parties, there were, at least, two strategic groupings.

- The fundamentalists, Biesalski called them the hawks,
- and the realos, the doves.
Anyway, high emotions dominated all the contributions,

- exemplified by a series of shots of Lucio Croatto from Padova.

- Crisis!
The total crash seemed to be inevitable.

But, you remember, crisis in ancient Greek medicine is that turning point at which it is decided whether agony or recovery is coming up. A crisis without an alternative is not a crisis.
This graph shows the distribution of attendance in relation to congress locations:
- red columns Eastern Europe (Roubles),
- blue columns Western Europe (Dollars).
- The number of the countries represented was undulating around 20.

Generally, congresses in the East attracted considerably more people, outstanding among them:
- the Gutzmann anniversary in Berlin 1980,
- the Dresden congress in 1987,
- Kiev 1991 and, extremely,
- Poznań 2008. In the West,
- Gerhard Kittel in Erlangen, 1988, managed to realize a big number of invitations resulting, along with many colleagues from the West, in the highest number of participants in this area.
And, indeed, the miracle happened, not least at all due to Lucio Croatto’s talent as an excellent mediator.

The implementation of two treasuries, one in the West in Dollars and one in the East in Roubles, proved to be an ingenious political trick to create a solid essential basis for practical cooperation by making possible mutual guest invitations to keep people in touch from both sides of the iron curtain.

- success!

By the way: this was a very strong motivation behind the professional and scientific ideas. In fact, UEP was a political organization. And, even with most of the problems unsolved and the association officially not existing (no by-laws!), it was decided to have annual congresses to search for a common sense, and to have alternating locations regarding the Dollar and the Rouble area for optimal conditions of attendance.
Participants from the corresponding area have always been dominating as you can see here for the congresses from 1984 to 1990.

- Congresses in the West
- Congresses in the East

Thus, the Union was, by no means, only some kind of travelling club just for fun. Many people attended the meetings in their own area to meet their colleagues from the other world.

But there was, in addition, another urgent need for contact, as Oskar Schindler stressed.
On the one hand, there was the German-speaking group, all of them related

- to Hermann Gutzmann: Froeschels, Seeman, Luchsinger, Arnold

- spreading out to Scandinavia with Weinberg in Sweden and Rauha Hammar in Finland and to slavic countries - with Oltuszewski in Poland.

- On the other hand
The francophone group

- with Tarneaud, Lafon, Perelló, Muller, and Croatto, to name just a few.

They and their successors barely knew each other, and there were, most probably, some mutual reservations to be overcome.

The Union offered a floor with their next congresses in Padova, Wrocław, and Paris with many basic discussions. But, still, there were no by-laws and now legal status.
Finally, in 1977, a commission was invited by the Secretary General, Oskar Caprez, to Muttenz, Switzerland, to hammer out

- the by-laws

- and have them officially registered in Basel
By-laws of the Union of European Phoniatricians

Art. 1
The association of the phoniatricians (medical doctors) of Europe adopts the name of:
Union of the European Phoniatricians (UEP)
Union des Phoniatres Européens (UPE)
Union der Europäischen Phoniatrer (UEP)
Sojus Jewropelskich Foniatorow (SEF)

The Union exists as an association according to the articles 60 and following of the Swiss Civil Code with its own juridical personality and will be registered in the Trade Register of the city of Basel. For any obligations of the society only the property of the Union can be liable.

- according to the Swiss Civil Code.
Art. 4
The purposes of the Union are:
— The promotion of the speciality of phoniatrics and the professional conditions of the phoniatricians, the scientific relations between the members and putting them into practice for the benefit of the medical care by medical doctors working in public health service as well as in private practice.
— The consolidation of solidarity among these medical doctors.
— The study of professional, social and ethic problems to be considered by the Union and the search for their solutions, in the interest of the phoniatricians and their patients.
— And, in general, the improvement of the conditions of living and work for its members by all legal means.

Professional
- „conditions“ and scientific
- „relations“ seemed to be an acceptable compromise between the two areas, and with the aspect of
- practice both of them could be usefully applied at the following meetings.
Phoniatics is that specialty of medicine that deals with diseases and disorders of voice, speech, language, hearing and the swallowing apparatus.

At the Lucerne-Congress in 1999
- a revised version of the by-laws was accepted
- with Ulrich Eysholdt from Erlangen setting the tone. Now,
  - a clear definition of the specialty was incorporated.

In a Festschrift, the history and the present state of phoniatries from 21 countries could be presented,
and the Gutzmann-Medal was awarded to internationally leading personalities for the first time.

During the following congresses, regrettably, professional aspects were fading into the background more and more, and, due to the annually changing presidents, there was a lack of continuity regarding the strategic profile. Many people were disappointed, and as a consequence,
at the Prague congress in 1982, Peter Biesalski as one of the founders, - did not show up. Crisis, alarm!

Extended discussion regarding the basic character of the Union and the organization and contents of the congresses resulted in the formation of a program commission
which met in Nijmegen half a year later on invitation af Carel Jansen to elaborate proposals for
- an effective administration in terms of continuity
- a truncus communis for the training of phoniatriicians in the frame of UEMS, to which I will return in a moment.

At first to the administration:
The Board elects a General Secretary Office for a period of 4 years.

- It is responsible for proposals regarding the planning and coordination of all kinds of activities of the Union to be confirmed by the General Assembly.

- Three commissions, appointed by the president, are monitoring the scientific as well as the professional developments in their areas of reference and draw conclusions for practical applications in terms of guidelines.

- The board may establish ad hoc Working Groups to evaluate specific scientific problems.

All of the commissions were quite busy and effective. Just a few examples:
Speech/Language: development, aphasia, stuttering

- Voice: voice range profile, acoustics, vocal fold vibration

- Hearing: pedaudiology, equipment, hearing aids

Stimulated by Oskar Schindler and Peter Biesalski, a close cooperation between the commissions resulted in a cumulation of their individual areas of reference to an integrative scope of

- phoniatriks as the medical specialty for communication disorders, to be based on evidence and not on opinion, heading for a systematic nosologic canon.

An essential effort in this direction, inaugurated and coordinated by myself, was, but finally, to no avail,
WHO
Detailed Proposals for the 10th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases and Injuries

Confirmation by the Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen

no further processing at the WHO headquarters in Geneva:
Lack of money!

a detailed elaboration for the 10th revision of the ICD following strictly the extensive guidelines published in the corresponding circulars of WHO.

- After confirmation by the European Regional Office, the procedure was interrupted by the WHO headquarters in Geneva due to lack of money.

Not a crisis, but a severe disappointment after a lot of work carried out with great enthusiasm.

Now: to UEMS:
The “European Union of Medical Specialists” (UEMS) as the official permanent committee to represent the medical specialists at the Advisory Committee of the European Union is, among others, responsible for a harmonization of training programs to be outlined

- by the “Advisory Committee on Medical Training”. Within the EU, this harmonization has been continuously advancing, including phoniatics since 1983.

- And it was Willy Wellens who, for the first time, drew the attention of the UEP to this essential topic.

In Nijmegen, a paper for the admission of phoniatics as a subspecialty in otorhinolaryngology was elaborated, with regard to those countries in which phoniatics was, then, not yet and, presumably would not be, in the near future, recognized as a specialty of its own standing. This paper, including a common trunk for training, was forwarded to UEMS.
The common trunk, published in the four official languages of the UEP, referred to
Truncus Communis for training

- definition
- theoretical, practical and medico-technical elements
- specific knowledge, competence, and skill
- conditions as to training centers and supervisors
- number of phoniatrians needed

- elements of training
  - knowledge, competence, and skill
  - training centers and supervisors
  - manpower
In the same year, the ENT Section invited two delegates from UEP to their meeting in Heraclion, to present and defend the paper. Willy Wellens and myself, we were the delegates.

- To say the truth, it was not an extremely satisfying event. Most of the time, we were locked out and only called in for short, say, petitions. Finally, a recommendation was formulated by the Section saying that phoniatic education is anyhow part of the training program for ENT,

- and that a post-ORL training program may be necessary to achieve special competence in phoniatics – luckily enough, no final decisions.
It is mainly due to the untiring efforts of Willy Wellens that 14 years later, in 1997, an "Associated Section of Phoniatriks" was installed to the ENT Section, dedicated to the study, the promotion and defence of phoniatriks in the member states of the EU.

- as to propositions by the ENT Section and recommendations by the Associated Section of Phoniatriks.

This was the first implementation of our field in the framework of an official professional profile on medical specialization in Europe.

- Success!
Further differentiation including phoniatrics was outlined in 2004 including

- special training programs as well as

- recognition and certification,
Success!

and recently, after quite a series of updates and rewritings by a number of enthusiastic young colleagues around Christiane Neuschaefer-Rube,

- this primary truncus communis has matured into a veritable logbook, not generally obligatory, but obviously, a strong recommendation which can be considered a great chance in the frame of increasing tendencies to partitioning and modularization of the traditional medical specialties.

- Success again!

Now, let me mention just one success and one crisis more.
An unbelievable success, a most spectacular event: In Kiev, 1991 still belonging to the Soviet Union, the opening ceremony took place in a monastery

- organized by Juri Wasilenko

- and guided by monks – overwhelming, but, also with strong indications of a severe crisis coming up, so that Harm Schutte called

- that Board meeting “The last supper of UEP”.
And, indeed, in Prague 1993, in spite of a well prepared program, many of us felt that the profile of the old UEP seemed to be not adequate anymore to the new political situation. With the iron curtain vanished and after the high emotions of 1989/90, uncertainty was spreading out increasingly.

- UEP fallen to the ground?
I found myself well portrayed as Don Quichotte, and I was, for the moment,

- rather helpless when I was called for this lecture.

So, what to do when you are got lost in the middle of nowhere?

Yes, ask friends for help. And that’s what I did.
I sent out a questionnaire on changes from the beginning of the new millenium, regarding

- The status of phoniatrics
- The number of phoniatricians
- The number of university departments
- And the impact of UEP.

And here are the answers from many cooperative colleagues, most hearty thanks to all of them.

All in all, the whole situation turned out to be better than expected.
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The official status looks quite stable, except in The Netherlands and in Sweden with considerable deterioration, in contrast to a most welcome improvement in Poland.

- At present, phoniatries is independent in 4 European countries.
In the majority of the countries, the number of phoniatricians has been increasing, exceptionally so in Germany and in Poland. In France, regrettably, we notice a clear decrease.
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University departments are reflected in rather differing figures. Ups and downs are roughly equal, but, it should not be neglected, that quite a number of units have lost their independence.
And now, to the impact of UEP:
In most of the responses, the impact was marked as „irrelevant“ after 2000, in contrast to the time before.

Our past president, Andrzej Obrębowski put it that way:
“Too many years I have observed only stagnation and lack of activity.

I still think, that the glory days of UEP have passed. Nevertheless the Union has fulfilled its task to unite all phoniatrists.”

Now, let us try a vague look into the future in terms of perspectives.
What I am going to present are not recommendations, but simply plain considerations, thoughts that came to my mind. You may like to incorporate some of them into your program—or not. It is just an offer.
As to the basic controversies, the old East-West conflicts can be, on principle, sorted out. Remain profile and target. The profile should, now as before, encompass professional as well as scientific elements.
Perspectives

Profile

- Professional
  - UEP: platform for UEMS

- Scientific
  - Reactivation and extension of Commissions
    - scientific monitoring
    - transformation to medical care
    - general guide-lines
  - Associated academy?
  - Floor for young colleagues

The professional profile should be determined by closest cooperation with UEMS, with UEP forming a basic democratic platform for the strategy of their delegates to the corresponding commission of UEMS.

- Scientifically:

Duties: Systematic monitoring of the corresponding scientific developments,
  transformation to practical measures in medical care,
  proposals for general guide-lines
to be discussed at congresses and voted on by the General Assembly.

- (Could also be realized by an associated academy.)
- Chances for individual papers for young colleagues to present themselves and get financial support from their institutions.
Perspectives

Target
independent specialty
versus
subspecialty (to ENT)
• Pragmatism beats formalism
  ✓ Special training
  ✓ Separate budget
  ✓ Sovereignty over personal
• Watch and shape trends

Rules and regulations for medical specialization regarding professional profiles and official recognition are continuously under discussion.
- My philosophy: Flexible pragmatism beats dogmatic formalism.
In spite of differing formal professional formats and independently from systematic orders, the medical challenges of the information age require the adoption of a recognized medical field – be it a specialty on its own or a subspecialty - with encompassing and distinct competence for communication disorders, with
  - a special training program, with separate budgets,
  - and sovereignty over personal, and that is phoniatrics.
By the way: We have to realize that an independent specialty per se does, by no means, guarantee those conditions (c.f. Germany), and a subspecialty does not, necessarily, exclude them (c.f. Austria).
- To achieve this goal: watch carefully and shape trends with strong determination.

Of course, it is not enough to claim this competence. It has to be proved again and again by specialized offers for the care of patients with communication problems, offers that other specialties cannot provide. Further prosperity requires untiring and continuous efforts from all of us. Otherwise, our beloved specialty may disappear from the face of the earth, more sooner than later.
Thus, let's stay together, all in the same boat:
United we conquer, divided we fall.
Or, as our late friend Aatto Sonninne used to put it:

- Phoniatricians of all lands, unite!