



# Reminiscences on the foundation of the Croatian Physiological Society

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## INTRODUCTION

Croatian Physiological Society (CROPHY) has a long history. In the former Yugoslavia existed as a national society, also under the name Croatian Physiological Society and was a member of the Union of Yugoslav Physiological Societies.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century CROPHY was one of the most active societies in the field of natural sciences in Croatia. Moreover, in the CROPHY as members were scientists from almost all branches of basic natural and medical sciences, because the number of researchers in each scientific branch was too low to enable the founding of independent society with the respectable scientific level. Many clinicians interested in the basic research were also members of the CROPHY. Similar situation was in the other Republics of the former Yugoslavia as well and congresses of the Union of Yugoslav Physiological Societies were really interdisciplinary meetings.

To illustrate this we analyzed the Membership list of the CROPHY from year 1980. CROPHY have had 170 membership paid members, belonging to 36 research groups. Research groups were mostly located in departments of basic medical and natural sciences at Universities and research institutes (Institute "Ruđer Bošković", Institute for medical Investigations, Pliva ..). By analyzing fields of research interests, how it was declared by members, an insight to the level of development of specific research fields could be obtained. Research fields were declared according to the classification of International Union of Physiological Societies (32 research fields), from which we can conclude about the main research interests of Croatian physiologists and most attractive research fields at that time. Five fields with the highest interest of members were the following: 1. Immunology (46), 2. Pharmacology (28), 3. Endocrinology (25), 4. Biochemistry (24) and 5. Environmental Physiology (23). Some fields which belong to the physiology classics were represented very poorly (with few members only) or without research interest at all. These fields are the following: Anthropology (0), Balance of electrolytes and water (0), Gerontology (1), Blood (3), Liver (4), Respiration (4) and Cardiovascular Physiology (5).

## FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY

The organized activities of the CROPHY, as a part of the Union of Yugoslav Physiological Societies, lasted approximately till the end of 1989, when dissolution of the Yugoslav Society was apparent. During 1990 all connections were broken.

In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Society did not exist in the organized form. However, in spite of this in that period we had very intensive communication and in some occasions collaboration between physiologists, particularly from Physiology departments of Medical Faculties. The Croatia as an independent country was successful and obtained in a short time period very positive international reputation and it was our duty to enlarge the visibility of the country through scientific activities as well. The fact that the Society representing one important scientific field, which was previously internationally recognizable, did not exist, was more and more the obstacle in our national and particularly international activities. This was one of the reasons that the chairmen of Physiological departments of Medical Faculties were initiators of the activities to renew the Society. The first meeting of chairmen of Physiology departments with this aim was organized, by initiative of Daniel Rukavina, on September 21, 1997 in Rijeka (Box 1). We discussed the problems in education and concluded to support the translation of the new edition of Guyton's Physiology, instead of Berne and Levy Textbook. Visits of lecturers, exchange of questions for examinations (multiple choice tests) and unification of criteria for examinations in Physiology were strongly urged. We were aware of the expectations of the scientific community to renew the Society and Željko Dujčić was appointed to coordinate these activities. In these activities the contribution of Matko Marušić was very valuable.

#### Meeting of Chairmen of Physiology Departments

(Rijeka, September 21, 1997)

Josip Roša, Zagreb  
 Željko Dujčić, Split  
 Filip Čulo, Mostar  
 Daniel Rukavina, Rijeka

Box 1

The founding meeting of the Society was held in Split on June, 6th 1999 in the organization of Matko Marušić and Željko Dujčić and participation of 10 physiologists (founding members): M. Berendika, M. Boban, F. Čulo; Ž. Dujčić, D. Jugović, M. Marušić, I. Miškić, M. Požar, J. Radan A. Sindić and M. Šitum. Preliminary Constitution of the Croatian Physiological Society was accepted at this meeting and Daniel Rukavina (Rijeka) was elected for President and Aida Salihagić (Zagreb) and Željko Dujčić (Split) for Vice-Presidents.

The first meeting of the Executive Council was held in Zagreb on June 14, 1999 and the officers of the Society were elected (Box 2). The logo of the Society was created by Ivan Sabolić. It was decided to establish four branches of the Society at four Universities: Osijek, Rijeka, Split and Zagreb and Periodicum Biologorum was declared as an official journal. The Society was officially registered in the Ministry

of Public Administration on October 5, 1999 and this day could be marked as a day of the foundation of the Croatian Physiological Society in the independent Croatia.

#### CROATIAN PHYSIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Daniel Rukavina, President  
 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Milivoj Boranić

Filip Čulo

Željko Dujčić, Vice-President

Matko Marušić

Daniel Rukavina, President

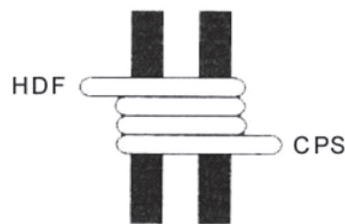
Ivan Sabolić

Aida Salihagić, Vice – President

Vlatka Sotošek, Secretary

Branko Vitale, Vice – President

HRVATSKO DRUŠTVO FIZIOLOGA



CROATIAN PHYSIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Box 2

In the year 2000 the Society was very active. Many formal and informal meetings were held, exchange of lecturers and collaboration between departments and research groups stimulated. Two meetings were held (Box 3) focused on the presentation of research and educational activities of Physiology departments and research groups.

#### MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY IN 2000

Zagreb, March 22, 2000

(organizer: Aida Salihagić)

Invited lecture: Ivan Sabolić

(State Award for Science in 1999)

Plitvička jezera, June 10, 2000

(organizer: Daniel Rukavina)

Invited lecture: Matko Marušić

(State Award for Science in 2000)

Box 2

First Congress of the Croatian Physiological Society was held in Osijek, September 14-16, 2000. Branko Vitale was the President of the Organizing Committee and



**Figure 1.** First Congress of the Croatian Physiological Society was held in Osijek, September 14-16, 2000. Participants in front of the Cathedral in Dakovo.

members Sven Kurbel and Ines Drenjančević-Perić. The Congress in Osijek was a full success in every sense of the word. We would like particularly to underline the enthusiasm of participants and the beautiful atmosphere we were surrounded by host institution and colleagues from Osijek (Figure 1). To the Congress attended 70 participants, it was six invited lectures of which two were presented by colleagues from abroad and 30 poster and oral presentations. A specific contribution of the Congress was a Round Table Discussion organized on the theme Physiology education. Five Invited speakers covered international trends in the Physiology education and our experience and contributions. The response of the audience and discussions were excellent and opened a new avenues of thinking how to improve the education in the field of Physiological sciences, particularly in the light of new technologies. We would like to remember the contribution given by the late Professor Nikša Pokrajac. Professor Pokrajac was an outstanding teacher and scientist, one of the founders and promoters of the new teaching approaches and scientific analyses of educational process in Croatia and above all esteemed colleague and beautiful person. The excursion which we had to the Park of the Nature Kopački rit was really fabulous.

## INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Immediately upon the founding we started with activities for international recognition of the Society. Connections with Physiological Societies in other countries were established (Austria, Germany, Hungary, Italia and Slovenia) and many colleagues from other countries visited our institutions and attended our meetings. It was necessary to fulfill many organizational and administrative requirements to enable the Society to be accepted as a full member

of the International Union of Physiological Societies. In these efforts we had a full support of many colleagues Croatian scientists working and living abroad. I would like to point out the contribution given by Dr. Krešimir Krnjević, Professor of Physiology at the McGill University, Montreal, Canada. Professor Krnjević is an outstanding scientist with the broad international reputation and was one of the high ranking officers of the IUSP. His advices and recommendations were very useful. Finally, after almost two years of activities, at the meeting of the General Assembly of the International Union of Physiological Societies which was held on August 26, 2001 in Christchurch (New Zealand), the Croatian Physiological Society was elected as a full member of the IUPS (Box 4). This was the final act in our efforts in the constitution and international recognition of the Croatian Physiological Society.

**Croatian Physiological Society a member  
of the IUPS**



General Assembly of the International Union  
of Physiological Societies (IUPS)  
Christchurch, New Zealand  
August 26th, 2001

Box 4

