

# EFOMP's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Recollections of the fifth President

**Dr. Karl Arne Jessen served as EFOMP President from 1993 to 1995. Here he recalls some of the key events that took place during his time in office.**

In recalling my time as EFOMP President 1993-95 I realized that many details had disappeared, but I also remember it as a very interesting period for our young Organization.

In 1993 we had a very successful meeting together with the Spanish Medical Physics Society in the furthest corner of Europe, namely Tenerife, with strong participation of young physicists which I found very promising. It was also succeeded with the European Communities to negotiate a Summer School of Medical Physics in Diagnostic Radiology in Nancy in June 1994. It was the third in a series of three Schools related to the Patient Directive Article 5 which set out the need for the “qualified expert in radiophysics”. The school was well attended with 43 students from 15 countries indicating a strong need for such arrangements. EFOMP did not have the financial capacity at that time to run Summer Schools without seeking external support and therefore the help from the EC was very much appreciated.

Another important cooperation was consolidated with the European Congress of Radiology (ECR) and EFOMP was allocated sessions on the Physics of Medical Imaging. In October 1994 Committee and Council Meetings were held in Aarhus, my hometown, with participation from the EC in discussions of the important issue about our professional status, again related to the Patient Directive. In 1994, Policy Statement no. 6, “Recommended guidelines of National Registration Schemes for Medical Physicists” was published. This Policy Statement promotes standards of qualifications, competence and conduct of scientists practicing in healthcare and provides the basis for the proper recognition of the medical physics profession.

At the end of 1994 we were all busy preparing the activities to celebrate the centenary of the discovery of X-rays by Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen on November 8<sup>th</sup> 1895 in Würzburg, which made the direct involvement of physicists in health-

care a necessity. EFOMP celebrated the event in September 1994, together with the German National Society – only a few metres from the historical location in Würzburg – with a very successful Congress. A second Summer School in radiophysics related to Diagnostic Radiology was held at the European Centre for Theoretical Physics in Trieste with nearly 50 participants. Another important event was the meeting on Quality Assurance in Radiotherapy organized by IAEA and held in Vienna in May. Because up to 80% of the medical physicists in some of our member organizations are working in areas related to radiotherapy, QA in this field is of course of great concern to EFOMP. The ability of the medical physicist to quantify physical and technical parameters may persuade our clinical colleagues to strengthen their approach to the subject in their area of responsibility.

A joint working group with ESTRO was operating during 1995 in order to reach a general agreement on staffing levels for the physics support to radiotherapy and a consensus based on total staff was presented at the ESTRO meeting in Gardone. Many medical physicists are individual members of ESTRO. This agreement resulted later in Policy Statement no. 7, “Criteria for the Staffing Levels in a Medical Physics Department”, published in 1997. The intense cooperation with the EC on the revised version of the Patient Directive resulted in the European guidelines on medical physics expert defined in Council Directive 97/43/Euratom from 1997 with a definition of the profession of the Medical Physicist and the degree of involvement in radiotherapy, nuclear medicine and diagnostic radiology. This formed the basis for the full recognition of our profession by our national health authorities and also facilitated the establishment of Registration Schemes, which had been proposed in Policy Statement no. 6.

In summary, I have the best memories from my period of service, not least because I was supported by a strong and cooperative group of Officers.



**Karl Arne Jessen**

Karl Arne Jessen was President of EFOMP from 1993-95. He was Chief Physicist at the Department of Medical Physics, Aarhus University Hospital, Denmark, from 1976 until his retirement in 2004. He was a founding member of the Danish Society of Medical Physics in 1981 and was that organisation's first President, from 1981-86. He sat on many national and EFOMP committees and was co-author of a number of reports and policy statements.