



# 7<sup>TH</sup> HOPE CONGRESS MUNICH 2010

NOVEMBER 3 - 7, 2010

## GREETINGS

### **Gerd Falk-Schalk**

President of HOPE (Hospital Organisation of Pedagogues in Europe)

Welcome Speech at the Reception in the Residenz on November 3, 2010

My name is Gerd Falk-Schalk and I'm here to represent as President the Hospital Organization of Pedagogues in Europe. First of all I would like to sincerely thank Herr Doktor Spaenle, State Minister for Education and Culture here in Bavaria, for the invitation to this gala reception, which is also the beginning of our seventh HOPE Congress.

I hope I'm not saying too much when I take your invitation as a recognition of our everyday work with our ill or functionally disabled students. I am sure that with me the colleagues from all over Europe and other parts of our world appreciate your attention for our work.

A special greeting to Mr. Lukšič, sports and education minister from Slovenia. We are happy to meet you here once again. We take your presence here as confirmation of your friendship and a shared interest in our concerns for the good of our students.

Thanks also to the organizers whose work we have been following on the excellent website and thus we know how much effort has gone into this great program. We are full of expectations. For a few more days I am president of HOPE. Here I reveal myself now as a Gerd from the North of Europe and not as a Germanic Gerd. Let me tell you very briefly something about my name. I am after all a teacher and as such I like to tell stories. My name originates from the Norse mythology. This Gerd was the loving companion of God Frey, the god of fertility, whose name lives on in the word Friday. Their love story did not last very long. Gerd died shortly after marriage. Apart from the name there is not much similarity between me and her, for she came from the family of the Giants and was the daughter of the giant Gymer. I'm looking forward to meeting some name sakes here in Munich.

Now to HOPE. The first meeting of hospital teachers was held in 1987 in Ljubljana. So again a point of reference to the Slovenia of Mr. Lukšič. Since then hospital teachers have met not only at conferences but also in 'European Days', numerous seminars and other meetings. We have criss-crossed Europe from south to north, east to west.

The results of the network of HOPE workshops involved the collaboration of our students. Once again at this Congress their work will be presented as public display material or in workshops.



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Another indication of our cooperation is our charter, in ten points the rights of the sick child to education is laid down. The Charter was adopted in 2000 by the General Assembly in Barcelona. Since then, it is pinned to the notice boards in all hospital schools in Europe, where HOPE members work ... right? We may best celebrate the 10 - year anniversary of the ten points by reviewing them against the backdrop of the current state of the educational needs of our students and new regulations or agreements. You are all cordially invited to participate in that task. I am very happy to see my mailbox overflow with critical observations from you.

Our charter is meant to serve as an instrument of evaluation for the educational ministries of Europe in regards to the teaching of ill or functionally disabled students in their countries.

The theme of HOPE is 'Continuity in the education of the sick child'. What that means can also be defined with the Charter.

At the end of the Congress our two networks medicine and school are going to put together a document which will be sent to the European health and education ministries in order to draw their attention to persisting weaknesses in the education programme for students whose representatives we are. Please begin to reflect about what should be included in that document. We only see so much expert knowledge on this subject assembled in one place during a congress.

HOPE has gained the recognition as an INGO (International Non Governmental Organization) with the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe was founded already in 1949, even before the EU, and it has now 47 member states. The statutes are at once the general declaration of human rights. Its governing body in a way, are the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member countries.

The Council of Europe is currently promoting a campaign 'Raise your hand against smacking'. Some of you have already entered your names on-line to support the campaign against smacking. HOPE will have an information desk in the Heckscher-Klinik. For those who are only now hearing about this campaign, there will be an opportunity to participate. You can best do that when registering for the General Assembly. A famous Munich lady, Silvia Sommerlath, now the Queen of Sweden, has already signed. So together with her you will get into the Hall of Fame of the campaign.

At our information desk you can also get postcards, a calendar, etc. with drawings of our students. They are very well done and beautiful. Perfect Christmas gifts.

It is a great pleasure to see so many familiar faces here again in the hall. But also so many that are with us for the first time. Let me tell the newcomers: You'll see that you are in good hands in our network. Wherever hospital teachers meet a friendly atmosphere prevails.



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The position as an INGO with the Council of Europe should give us the possibility to promote the needs of our students more widely. This is however a slow process. Many people have very little knowledge about what hospital schools are. Time and again we need to explain patiently what hospital teachers really do. In order to become more successful and achieve goals faster, we need friends in the medical community and politicians who realize the importance of a continuing course of education also for the recovery of young patients. After the conference I hope we shall have found many new such friends.

Now let us enjoy the evening. We thank Mr. Spaenle again and the City of Munich for this lovely reception. Tomorrow our good cooperation will begin. Thank you for your attention.