

EUROBS 01003

## Opening Ceremony

Chairpersons:

C. Sureau, Paris, France  
Sir R. Feroze, London, United Kingdom  
R. Klimek, Cracow, Poland

## FIGO and EAGO

J. Tomkinson, United Kingdom

*Former Secretary-General of the Federation International of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO)*

**The development and growth of the European Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians. An address given at the Opening Ceremony of the Fourth Scientific Meeting of the European Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians held at Cracow, Poland, Thursday, 7 September 1989**

By

John Tomkinson  
Honorary Secretary-General FIGO

The idea of the European Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians was developed in discussions between Rustam Feroze, Claude Sureau, Hans Ludwig and Markku Seppälä during September 1984 at Claude Sureau's chateau in France.

Further discussions took place during February 1985 at Professor Ludwig's department in Basel, Switzerland, The precise date of the foundation of EAGO was the fifteenth of February 1985.

For many years some areas of the world have had Regional Associations, notably Latin America and Asia with Oceania, acting as a bridge between National Societies and the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics. But until 1985 there was no European Association.

This was because in Europe there were strong self-sufficient National Societies such as existed in France, Italy, Germany. Indeed, in the case of Great Britain the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists assumed such authority that the

name of no country has been appended to the title. However, in the smaller European Societies of the speciality there was everything to gain by the formation of a European Association and the strength of EAGO has benefited mostly from the collective enthusiasm of these more modest societies.

When EAGO was planned there were two options as to membership; firstly, through National Societies and, secondly, through individuals joining as single members. Very wisely the last option was chosen so that EAGO is a family of persons and each one can take a pride in direct membership of EAGO. This is in contrast with the membership of the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics which through its huge size can only function through the 86 National Societies forming its General Assembly.

So EAGO is the European Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians, comprising gynaecologists and obstetricians, also those undergoing recognised training for the speciality and, thirdly, others contributing to the speciality; all in European countries.

The *aims* and *objects* of EAGO are:

1. To encourage the exchange of clinical experience and scientific thought and investigation among European gynaecologists and obstetricians;
2. To consider the ethical and social implications of present practice;
3. To conserve the speciality as an entity whilst acknowledging the present trend towards subspecialisation;
4. EAGO is to co-operate with national and international societies such as the Polish Society and FIGO.

The *ways* and *means* by which the above aims and objectives are reached are:

1. By regular scientific meetings (of which this present one is typical and is the fourth meeting, there having been a first meeting in London in June 1986, then in Paris in 1987 and the third in Nijmegen in 1988);
2. The publication of a journal;
3. The co-ordination of multicentre trials;
4. The promotion of internationally agreed definitions;
5. The improvement of interchange between research workers;
6. And most importantly the arrangement of exchange posts for young specialists.

So EAGO is acting in a central advisory capacity for gynaecologists and obstetricians in Europe and for trainees in the speciality. The organisation fills a need that national societies and FIGO cannot fulfil.

The present membership of EAGO is over 800 and is increasing by leaps and bounds. At this meeting in Cracow there are over 300 active participants. So, quoting from David Everett (1794–1888).

“Large streams from little fountains flow  
Tall oaks from little acorns grow”.