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Nationality / Country of residence	Swedish / French
Date of birth:	13 July 1945
Civil Status:	unmarried
Specialisation:	Research
Member of EUROSPINE since:	1998
Previous Positions within EUROSPINE:	2010 – 2015: Chair Task Force Research 2015 – 2016: Vice President, Chair Awards Committee
Current position:	2016 – 2017: EUROSPINE President Institutional Member of Programme Committee & Site Committee

**all office terms are carried out from October to October of the respective years*

1. Could you describe your most important tasks and duties as EUROSPINE President and how they are carried out within the Executive Committee?

Important task are planning the future, which is done in periods of about 3-5 years, to meet the demands and growth of the society's members and execute the goals set by the General Assembly and Executive Committee.

It is a pleasure to be part of a growing society like EUROSPINE, with an excellent ExCom, which duties are divided among the councils heading the various committees. Suggestions are forwarded by members, the committees and the councils. The Executive Committee (ExCom) provides recommendations for future steps of the society, which are then approved by the General Assembly during the Annual Meeting. This organisational structure allows the society to meet the needs of our members and a variety of demands. We always encourage members to approach us with suggestions and/or great ideas to move the society forward.

Can you describe the different duties as Vice President and President of the society?

You try to learn from your predecessor. I have an excellent predecessor in Michael Ogon, introducing me to the various tasks and responsibilities as EUROSPINE President. The Vice President holds separate responsibilities in the Presidential Line (PresLine), committees and various tasks which ExCom assigns.

There is a continuum in the PresLine (vice, current and past presidents, secretary and delegate of ExCom), i.e. the commitment for presidency is 3 years starting as vice president.

Now that I only have a few more months as president, I can tell you that the president definitely has more work to do than the vice president – it is a very busy task and I have enjoyed almost every minute of it.

How often do you interact with the ExCom in terms of face to face meetings or telephone conferences?

The ExCom meets regularly and in a well-structured manner. ExCom have three planned meetings per year – during the Annual Meeting, in January, and a meeting in spring April or May, often in conjunction with the EUROSPINE Spring Speciality Meeting.

Additionally, we have bi-weekly operational calls with the PresLine, the delegate of ExCom Beat Leimbacher and the two directors, Judith Reichert (administration), and Julie Lyn Noël (education and research), who then further meet and distribute the tasks with the project managers Claudia Ortner, Conny Schmutzer, and Sandy Sutter.

If needed, the PresLine has additional face-to-face meetings or conference calls with the councils, treasurer or/and other ExCom members. This organisation allows EUROSPINE leadership to be proactive, productive and act in a timely manner.

2. Could you tell about yourself and how your background has brought you to the society and your current role as EUROSPINE President?

I was born in Switzerland, raised in France and Sweden, studied in Sweden and USA. I started my education with a physiotherapy degree and continued with a Dr. Med. Sci., Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Göteborg, Göteborg, Sweden. I was offered to start the Occupational & Industrial

Orthopaedic Centre (OIOC) including Clinic, Research and Education at the Department of Orthopedic Surgery, New York University in New York City. When I left OIOC we had 20 employees, a busy clinic, research and education units and had examined over 100 MSs and 34 PhDs, a wonderful and exciting time.

In 2009 I was approached by the EUROSPINE President Federico Balagué to set up a Task Force Research (TFR), which I then chaired from 2010 to 2015. EUROSPINE has always been close to my heart as a growing society of excellence. I knew I would move back to Europe after my tenure in New York and wished to be more involved in the society.

3. Did you face any obstacles on your way?

There have been a few obstacles along the way, none of them unsolvable, but some of them challenging. Our Annual Meetings are now attracting more than 3.000 participants with an excellent programme (council head: Stavros Stavridis) that we have to plan 5-6 years in advance to find suitable sites for participants and exhibitors.

EUROSPINE is a society that wants to grow and expand for spine specialists, educators and researchers. The society's membership has doubled in the past five years. Creating the European Spine Societies Advisory Board (EuSSAB) (council head: Christoph Siepe) brings additional 7.000 plus associated members from 27 European countries into the society. EUROSPINE tries to meet the needs and demands from spine specialists around Europe which is challenging and exciting. Growth is always very satisfying but demanding.

4. As EUROSPINE President, what are visions for the society in a short and long term?

The short term vision for EUROSPINE has been to meet the demands of growth, by restructuring operations, adding staff where necessary, support the councils and committees and watch the budget.

As the presidency is a continuum of past president and incoming president (Frank Kandziora) the long term goals are defined in our striving to maintain EUROSPINE the best European spine society. Our education and research programmes (council heads: Bernhard Meyer and Björn Rydevik) are long term commitments such as onsite courses, e-learning, fellowships, spine centre certificates, a non-surgical diploma and grant funding as examples. We are achieving equivalency diploma and harmonisation throughout European spine specialists. EUROSPINE as a society offers the highest quality for continued education for clinicians and researchers and the future vision is to create an educational platform for our members.

This is the decade of collaboration and globalisation and the vision here is to increase collaboration with our stakeholders such as other societies, academia and industry and others with interest in spine for education and research. EuSSAB is one example of great success; another is the diploma courses in China (Thomas Blattert, the Secretary of EUROSPINE).

5. What specific goals have you set yourself and the society for the duration of your term as EUROSPINE President and which actions are you carrying out to meet these goals?

I had set myself and the society some goals in October 2016 and I am proud to say that most of them have been realised:

- Making sure the 5 councils (membership, education, research, stakeholders and meetings) representing the various committees within the ExCom, have the support of ExCom they need to grow in their fields.
- Successfully planning the Annual Meeting and the Spring Speciality Meeting 3-5 years in advance, which is now a reality.
- Having a transparent election process of EUROSPINE officers, i.e. create a Nomination Committee chaired by the past president and 5 additional members which is in place this year 2017.
- Setting up a task force for the non-surgical diploma, which was approved by ExCom and established recently and will meet during 2017-2018.
- Making sure that the EUROSPINE staff team, including the directors and managers, have the necessary resources in terms of tools supporting efficiency and appropriate and legal contracts according to their workload to handle the growth of the society.
- Consolidate the society's budget
- Planning for EUROSPINE's Way Forward strategy 2017-2020, which is currently being prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting in Dublin.

6. Do you think EUROSPINE has changed the landscape of spinal care within Europe and if so, how?

I strongly believe that EUROSPINE contributes to and is part of increasing knowledge and research for spine care professionals in Europe. With the creation of EuSSAB we are able to reach for a harmonised spine care diploma for spine surgeons and soon for all spine care providers. EUROSPINE's branding stands for quality spine care within Europe and beyond by promoting evidence based care, a request more and more common from societies. For our patients we provide online evidence based patient education in several languages. EUROSPINE's Patient Line website has over 40.000 hits per month, something we can be very proud of.

7. What do you think is the secret of EUROSPINE's success story?

I think what we do within EUROSPINE is that we listen to our Members – The Membership Committee (council head: Serdar Kahraman) is very active and communicates the needs of our members directly to the ExCom. Active chairs in all councils use their expertise to move the requested concepts forward.

EUROSPINE especially supports and promotes young members, which allows the society to grow and diversify with the ever-changing environment and therefore stay up to date and modern.

During my presidency, I have had several requests from young members to get involved in the society, which is exactly what we want to see – so it is definitely part of our success story.

Our success is also thanks to our various supporters including our members, associate members, MedTech Industry, Pharma and others. We continuously receive requests from other societies and institutions for collaboration on various levels, which is a good sign.

8. Personally, what have you gained from your interaction with EUROSPINE?

First of all the people in EUROSPINE who give so much "pro bono". I experienced harmony and enthusiasm within PresLine, ExCom and committees, which allows for productiveness. For me being engaged in EUROSPINE means getting new knowledge, colleagues, friends and experience a Europe working together albeit distinct cultural differences for improved patient care.

9. Imagine your term comes to an end and you are responsible to find a replacement – what traits would you be looking for in an applicant?

I would look for someone with knowledge about EUROSPINE and a vision. In addition having a strong interest in clinical outcomes, education and research to move the society forward. EUROSPINE is a complex organisation and we want to be the leaders in spine care in Europe and perhaps beyond. It is important to listen, to be a diplomat, keeping cool, having negotiation skills, having humour, show respect and most important move items forward step by step.

It has been a true pleasure to be the first woman president and I hope there are many more women to follow. If you are interested talk to me.

10. If you could give one piece of advice to a young fellow spine specialist – what would it be?

Join EUROSPINE, get involved in education, research, programme development or membership, or any of the other committees – there are many! Choose the one most suitable for your interests and expertise, I am sure there is an opportunity for mutual benefit.

The people who have moved EUROSPINE forward are the people who are also personally involved in promoting education, research and other collaboration for spine ailments. Epidemiology tells us, spine disorders will be the number one health care issue in coming years. Therefore, promoting multidisciplinary partnerships is important. Currently EUROSPINE members are mostly surgeons, but the society needs neurologists, epidemiologists, chiropractors, physiatrists, physiotherapists, rheumatologists, economists, radiologists, osteopaths, biomechanicians and others– you see, you will find your place in the multidisciplinary EUROSPINE family!

GET INVOLVED, it really rewards your life!