

Laudatio Hildigunnur Svavarsdottir

June 2022

Dear Hildigunnur

On my way to the chairmanship of the ERC, I asked you what you felt the ERC needed to change. You answered me that diversity would be the most important change you would hope for. That was probably the best advice the ERC could have received. As a nurse and as a woman, you know how difficult it is to become a leader in organisations governed by male doctors. I promised you that I would do all I could to bring diversity to the ERC in every meaning of the word.

Your first contact with the ERC was in Antwerp at the ERC congress in the year 2000, 22 years ago.

You started as a member of the newly established Icelandic Resuscitation Council in 2001 and you became its vice-Chair from 2010 to 2016.

You aimed toward the Icelandic Resuscitation Council joining the ERC which became a fact in 2006 with a Memorandum of Understanding, later in 2008 with a full agreement signed in Ghent on the occasion of the ERC congress.

You pioneered the ERC Advanced Life Support courses in Iceland in 2017. You actively supported the ERC courses in Palestine and you served as a course director on the Immediate and Advanced Life Support courses.

In 2010 you were awarded Fellow of the European Resuscitation Council. You chaired the Organising committee of the ERC Congress in Reykjavik in 2016. You participated in the guidelines writing group for the ERC Guidelines 2020.

You served as the Secretary of the ERC Board from 2013 until 2021. In that capacity you were a delegate for the ERC in the general assembly of the International Liaison Committee On Resuscitation.

From 2017-2021 I had the honour of working closely with you in the General Purpose Committee of the ERC which means that we met every week, virtually, for an hour, usually at 8 in the morning (7 in Iceland). We discussed often very difficult problems in challenging times for the ERC.

The travel time between your home and Brussels is ridiculously long with impossible flight connections, making it a real challenge for you to attend ERC meetings. But you were always available for the Office staff when they needed someone to listen. I remember that we were jogging together on a roof top of a hotel during one of the ERC meetings, and that you took time to also listen to me. Hildigunnur, you live in one of the coldest countries in Europe but you are one of the warmest people I know.

In your professional life you became the Chief Executive Officer of the Akureyri Hospital in Iceland. You started in Antwerp more than 20 years ago, now the circle is complete.

Dear Hildigunnur, I am very happy to award you the Honorary Membership of the European Resuscitation Council.