



# Fighting for Access: 25 YEARS AND COUNTING!

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In 1992, three visionary leaders in the plasma protein industry—Ralph Galustian (Bayer), Otto Schwarz (Immuno), and Guelfo Marcucci (Gruppo Marcucci)—decided to establish a specific Association focusing on plasma protein therapies (PPTs).

Robert W. Reilly became the first Executive Director of the newly formed International Plasma Products Industry Association (IPPIA). Because of legislative initiatives in Europe that were very important to our industry, it was decided to start Association activities in Europe.

In the fall of 1993, I received a phone call from Karl Petrovsky—who was working in the legal office of Immuno in Munich, Germany at the time—to attend a meeting in Zurich to discuss the creation of an Association specific to the PPT industry. Unfortunately, I could not attend because of important company issues. In December, I attended a meeting with EFPIA (European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industry Associations) who, until that moment, had a working group with limited activities in the PPT sector. At that December meeting, it was decided to establish a new Association in Europe. I remember the special atmosphere at that meeting. The head of EFPIA was not pleased.

In January 2004, the first meeting was held in London and one of the decisions that needed to be made was naming the newly established Association in Europe. Determining a name took a long time because the chosen name had to be different from EFPIA. That was the beginning of the European Association of the Plasma Products Industry (EAPPI). The first chairman was Knut Hansen (Immuno), who was an excellent industry leader. Other Board members were Jean-Marie

Vlassembrouck (Baxter), Roland Hagberg (Kabi), Bill Hartin (Alpha Therapeutics), Jack Ryan (Bayer), Roloff Johannsen (Behringwerke), Norbert Chariatte (Berna), Giovanni Rinaldi (Gruppo Marcucci), Manel Canivell (Gruppo Grifols), and myself, Jan M. Bult (Biotest).

It was an interesting experience, especially since Karl Petrovsky and I now work full time for the Association. Special credit needs to be given to Robert W. Reilly who moved to Europe with his wife, Ann, to do all the groundwork necessary to build the Association. It was not an easy task but they worked tirelessly to make it happen.

There was a special role for Knut Hansen, the first chairman of EAPPI. Knut Hansen was, at that time, the visionary head of Immuno's Legal and EU/International Department. Hansen was the rare combination of an outstanding, pragmatic attorney with a deep understanding of the plasma products industry sector, and a brilliant diplomat and negotiator. At that time, around 1992, our industry was dealing with the need to advocate for some changes to the very first Blood Directive 89/381/EC of 1989, which was developed as a consequence of the HIV tragedy in the '80s.

With the growing complexity of the issues, and the need for a very specific industry advocacy, Knut Hansen was among the key leaders who convinced his industry peers that this sector needed its own association. The first steps to create an industry association were done with Robert W. Reilly and the American Blood Resources Association's International Committee, of which Knut Hansen was a member. This is how Hansen decided in the fall of 1993 to ask Karl to call me. The rest is history. ●