

Prof. Dr. Sergio Santos del Riego, 16 October 2009

Welcome to Spain and Galicia. As Chairman of the Spanish Association of Deans of Occupational Therapy (OT) and Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of A Coruña, I am delighted to welcome you to the fifteen (15th) Meeting of the European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education (ENOTHE) in this year “two thousand and nine”, year of the “Creativity and the Innovation”. It represents an excellent opportunity to exchange educational experiences in the principles that govern the European Higher Education Area.

I would like to thank the General Coordinator of ANECA, Ms Leonor Carracedo, for her presence here today. The professor **Gemma Rauret, ex-Director of ANECA**, and other people have been at the forefront of the excellent work carried out by the internal and external employees of ANECA, the national quality agency, in adapting the Spanish University System to the new European criteria. These reforms imply a change in teaching methods in Spain, moving away from the model that appeared in the nineteenth century and towards a teaching-learning model more in keeping with the twenty-first century. The organisers of this Meeting wish to honour and pay tribute to all those that form part of ANECA, which, in a display of creativity and innovation have made it possible to implement the Bologna model. For this reason, **Mss. Carracedo**, the Rector of the University of A Coruña, acting on behalf of the eighteen (18) university schools of Occupational Therapy, would like to present ANECA with this token of our esteem, a piece of Sargadelos pottery and the ‘volute that symbolises success’. **Many, many thanks for your hard work and for turning the reform of Spain’s university system into a reality.**

Thanks are also due to the Rector of the University of A Coruña together with all his team, especially the Head of Quality and New Technology (Professor Elena Sierra), and the Deans of the Sociology and Communication Sciences, and their respective faculties, for the wonderful facilities they made available for the celebration of the fifteenth ENOTHE Meeting, as well to the Xunta de Galicia, the A Coruña City Council, the Spanish Association of Deans of Occupational Therapy (CNDEUTO), the Spanish Professional Association of Occupational Therapy (APETO), the Autonomous Occupational Therapy Associations, and especially to the Professional Association of Occupational Therapy of Galicia (APGTO), the PanAmerican Medical Publishers, various centres of professional practice, and Orthopedic companies, the Pelouro group, the Center of Medical Informatics (IMEDIR), the Gerontology Research Group, the Department of Medicine, the Department of Physical Therapy, service personnel, students groups who have been committed to the success of this Meeting. In particular, I would like to thank **Professor Jorge Teijeiro**, the previous Dean of the Health Sciences faculty, who has always believed in our projects, and very, very specially the Organising Committee and the principal organiser of this event, **Professor Inés Viana**, for the enormous amount of hope and sheer hard work she has put into Occupational Therapy.

Innovation, Imagination, Creativity, Diversity, Respect for professionals and Meaningful occupation. Today we are inaugurating a European Meeting on Occupational Therapy in A Coruña, the city that is home to the Tower of Hercules, a UNESCO World Heritage Site boasting a history that dates back two thousand years. Far from being a point of culmination, this Meeting marks the start of a new historic period for Occupational Therapy in Spain, which is gradually looking towards Europe. Occupational Therapy in Spain open to research possibilities and equal opportunities.

My thanks to **Mercedes Abella**, the founder of Occupational Therapy in Spain; and to **Anna Font, Carmen La Casa, Alicia Chapinal, María José San Román, Ana Vicente** and many others. And finally, my thanks must also go to **Hanneke Van Brugge** and the members of ENOTHE for giving us this opportunity. I trust that this Meeting will prove to be of great scientific and social value, and that you will also have time to explore and enjoy this magnificent city. **Benvidos, Bienvenidos, Welcome!!! to the city of A Coruña!** **Thank you very much!!!**