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My experience at the ERS Congress, 3 September 2016

I felt very honoured that I could run a workshop together with Kerstin and Amanda. KIT, the Congress logistics company, booked a hotel for me and it was a very good one. It was not all too far from the congress centre. I booked my flight. All went well except for the almost 4 hours delay on the Sunday when I left London.

When I arrived in London, I visited Trafalgar Square, to say hello to Kerstin, she was there on behalf of the free lung-test. I said hello and I went to the National Gallery. It was very impressive with very beautiful floors and paintings. I really enjoyed.

During the preparation I felt nervous about my English but it appeared to be good enough. It was great to meet many people who I only knew by phone, email or Facebook on the patient organisation networking day.

I understood most of the speeches and these were very interesting. There was a singing workshop, which was fun.

A few years ago I had registered as a patient reviewer for the BMJ, but something went wrong. Rosamund Snow, the BMJ patient editor and keynote speaker on the day, had a very inspiring speech and she was willing to give me her email address and she solved the problem so now I am registered properly. I also met a researcher from the Netherlands - very nice to meet and to speak with her.

In the afternoon, it was our turn. Kerstin started and explained what EPAP is and how it works, Amanda, also a patient ambassador, who had been involved in an EU project, had an interesting story, she told about the cooperation with several patient organisations and other things and after her story it was my turn. I talked about my experience in a personal way: With EPAP I can cope better with my conditions and I feel more 'professional'. I am able to do my voluntary work better. I explained what help each module gave me.

The official opening ceremony of the congress was very exciting: some scenes of several musicals were danced and sang. The 'Queen' declared the ERS Congress open. One lady next to me thought it was the real Queen. Several scientists were honoured. After that was a huge dinner. Unfortunately I was not able to eat, due to my condition, but the smell was delicious. I met some people from ELF and it was great! I got many compliments and I was really touched by that and I felt proud of myself.

I was very impressed by all the stairs I had to take and the distances in London. Amsterdam seems to be a small rural town. As you see I am not used to the enormous London but I like it.



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