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Prof. Dr. h. c. and Mrs. Francis de Paula Hanika

## Prof. Dr. h. c. FRANCIS DE PAULA HANIKA †

In the night from January 1 to 2, while asleep, the long-term vicepresident of the Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies, member of the Board of the International Federation for Systems Research, associate editor of *Cybernetics and Systems: An International Journal*, editor of the *IFSR-Newsletter* and editor of the *International Cybernetics Newsletter*, Professor F. de P. Hanika, died in his new apartment in Bad Gams, Austria. Professor Hanika was 84 years old.

My cooperation and friendship with Paul Hanika started in 1971. One day, when I was sitting in the (then) only room of the just recently established Austrian Society for Cybernetic Studies, I received a call from a man who told me that he had just passed by from Khartoum and would like to meet me. Puzzled that the knowledge about our society had already spread so far, I invited him to come right to our office.

He told me that he had just retired from the chair of management science of the University of Khartoum and, though his wife was Scottish, they had fallen in love with a nice place in Styria and they were planning to buy some land and build a house where to spend the rest of their life. Most of the rest – because he felt fully active and wanted to help us wherever we could need him.

If we could! We had considered to arrange some kind of a conference of cyberneticians and systems researchers in Austria, both in order to exchange ideas and to spread the "cybernetic seed" in Austria. But we had no

experience how to do it. Paul had. Though it was very late, a few months only before the date we had envisioned, he drafted the program, invited chairmen, looked for contributors, and gave a name to the conference: Since we hoped that at least some scientists would come from outside of Austria, "European" wouldn't be too wrong. And since we were not sure if more than 30 people would come, "Meeting" would suit anyway. Thus, in 1972, the first "European Meeting on Cybernetics and Systems Research" took place, with about 150 participants, coming from more than 20 countries, also outside Europe. From then on, the Meetings took place biennially, thanks to the initiative and the efforts of Paul Hanika. And we decided not to change the name, e.g. to "International Congress" though the meetings had really become international.

It took some time until we learned more from Paul about his life. And it was a really unusual one! Born in 1880 in St. Pölten, about 60 kilometers west of Vienna, he was educated in a Jesuit school in Czechoslovakia, he worked in an international timber business company with centers in London, Hamburg, and Vienna. He worked his way up to senior management level, and in 1931 formed his own company, Continental Hardwoods Ltd. 1939 ended this timber business, but soon thereafter he started his second career as production manager of Aetna Steelworks in Sheffield, and added the Diploma in Metallurgy to his accomplishments.

In 1950, the Royal Technical College of Glasgow decided to build up a management school: Paul Hanika seemed to be their right man to join the foundation team. Thus, at the age of 50, Paul Hanika started his third