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Selected remarks of the opening Speech
at the EURAG Conference on
**“How to Take Active Care of Body and Mind When Ageing –
Aiming at Preserving One’s Capacities as Long as Possible”**
Piéstany, Slovakia, 27 August 2024

Honourable guests, dear colleagues, and dear friends!

After having briefly described the European Federation of Older Persons, EURAG, and the aim of today’s conference, I would like to emphasize the fact that you are among the most active part of the older population in the many countries where EURAG has members. As I know from your personal choices, you have keen interest in music, brain training, dance, gymnastics and many more interesting human activities.

The Roman poet Juvenal, who lived almost two thousand years ago, wrote in one of his essays *“Orandum est, ut sit mens sana in corpore sano”*, which means *“So, let’s pray that a healthy mind be in a healthy body”!* What an important reflection and so valuable for us – at any age!

Today, I would like to highlight for you some aspects and activities that might be useful for you to preserve your capacities as long as possible. And when I think about our capacities, I mean in fact all our physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and social abilities – and even all other ones you may rightly think of.

Now, let me suggest some practical ways and means you can easily apply in your life – provided you consider them as important for you and have the determination to implement them as regular acts “To Do”. I have 18 very short recommendations and trust that you can find them reasonable and might connect them with the realities of your life – even if they sometimes may require a special effort.

- Be physically active, start exercising moderately and then increase your efforts.

- Take care to also have sufficient rest and make sure that you get enough sleep.
- Apply carefully the following exercise steps: tension – detention – and then a new effort.
- Care for sane and balanced nutrition, don't overeat and always drink enough – best is good water.
- Cultivate your positive(!) social contacts and partnership(s) – and avoid toxic relationships.
- Be sure that you have access to good medical care by doctors you trust and give much attention to hygiene
- Look carefully after yourself and plan joyful moments for you – also with others you appreciate.
- Feel fully responsible for yourself and your doings and care for others who need support.
- Be aware of the wisdom that “to give more than to take” provides much more rewards.
- Stay always curious and never stop learning and practicing what you may have learned.
- Look eagerly for new challenges and options of life that you can try and live up to.
- Search actively for possibilities of personal success and fulfilment that can provide satisfaction.
- Be frankly proud of your achievements and grant yourself rewards for good actions well done.
- Increase systematically your intellectual, mental and physical mobility and flexibility.
- Stay actively connected with your family, your friends, the surrounding community – and even the world.
- Increase your communication abilities and your capacities to connect, without shying away from modern tools.
- Ask yourself very honestly “What is real happiness for me?” and how can I achieve it?
- Consider frankly what may not be so important for you – for example: a lot of money, power, recognition by others, longevity, etc.

To end my contribution to this conference, I would like to quote Albert Einstein who said so wisely: *“There are many ways to happiness – One of them is to stop complaining”*.

Good luck to you all and thanks for having listened to me so patiently.

Dirk Jarré – President of EURAG

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