At the last annual conference of the European Association of Law and Economics (EALE) in Aix-en-Provence we heard the tragic news of Göran Skogh’s death. Göran was the founding father and first president of the EALE; he died on the 11th of May, 2014.

Professor Emeritus of Economics Göran Skogh (1943-2014) obtained an MA in Economics at the University of Lund (Sweden), where he studied from 1964 until 1968. He became interested in the economic analysis of law when writing his PhD at the same university. His early scientific research dealt with economic analysis of criminal law; Göran graduated in 1973 with a thesis called “Priser, Skadestånd och Straff ” (Prices, torts and punishments). Those interested in the background of Görans choice for writing a thesis on the economics of crime may wish to read the dinner speech that Göran held at the 25th anniversary of the EALE in Rome on 17 September 2009 (http://ealeorg.blogspot.nl/2010/09/skoghs-dinner-speech-and-memoirs.html). In his speech, Göran stated that it was his intention to examine how crime and criminals could be understood by economic analysis. Such an approach was not evident in the late nineteen-sixties and early nineteen-seventies, when scientific treatment of crime was a matter of criminology, sociology and medicine.

For his scientific research Göran made an unconventional and brave choice, which brought micro-economics and game theory to the study of criminal law in Sweden and Europe, several decades before the award of the Nobel Prize to Gary Becker.

From 1968 until 1998 Göran worked at the department of economics of the University of Lund, first as lecturer, later as associate professor. From 1991 until 1994 he was chairman of the Department of Economics. He also worked part-time at the International Institute of Industrial Environmental Economics at Lund University (IIIEE) from 1995 until 1998. Göran Skogh was acting professor at the University of Uppsala (1978-1979), visiting professor at the Business School in Copenhagen (1985-1986) and assistant professor at the University of California in Santa Barbara (1982-1983). Göran gave lectures at several other universities, including the University of Florida, and the universities of Luxembourg and Paris. He presented his scientific work at many conferences, both in Europe and the US. He supervised many PhD theses, including the work of EALE members Göran Hägg and Per-Olof Bjuggren. Professor Skogh also provided policy advice to the Swedish Ministry of Justice and he
contributed to six public committee investigations on crime (minor thefts), consumer policy and environmental policy (natural resources, waste) and energy policy.

At the beginning of his academic career in Sweden, Law and Economics at Lund University developed rapidly. Together with Carl Martin Roos, Göran started a joint Law and Economics seminar. In 1974, Göran organized a symposium in Lund, to which James Buchanan, Guido Calabresi and Richard Posner contributed. However, in the mid nineteen-seventies the progress in Sweden stalled and Göran decided to intensify his international contacts. In his Rome dinner speech of 2009, Göran explained that he became pessimistic about his professional future, fearing that it was impossible to get a Law and Economics chair in Sweden. Therefore, he started as an alternative, in his own words, “his own business”, creating a private foundation called Forum for Law & Economics. Soon afterwards he started thinking about creating the European Association of Law and Economics. This historical initiative aimed at strengthening the ties between the Law and Economics researchers in Europe and thus promoting the diffusion of Law and Economics in academia and political circles. It was, again in Göran’s own words, “natural for me to take the initiative to the European Association”. He organized the EALE’s founding conference in Lund on 19-21 March 1984. With this initiative Göran became the founding father of EALE and this has become his greatest legacy. Göran was elected the first president of the EALE and remained in this capacity from 1984 until 1987. Today the EALE has become a well-established and legally incorporated scientific association with over 300 members. The EALE has honoured Göran in 2009 with the Association’s life-time achievement award. In addition, the creation of the Göran Skogh Award in 2012 is a recurring token of appreciation for Göran’s belief in researcher’s creative abilities, no matter whether they are Nobel Prize winners or promising young students. The Göran Skogh Award is a prize that a jury of Law and Economics scholars attributes every year to the best paper presented by a young scholar at the annual EALE conference. The Award will remain a lasting tribute to Göran’s life-long commitment for promoting Law and Economics research in Europe.

Göran published widely in his fields of interest (economics of crime and punishment, liability, insurance and the environment). According to WorldCat, Göran Skogh has 130 publications in four languages; many of his books and articles can be found in libraries worldwide and are often cited. Many of its articles have been used as teaching materials for students. In the early days of EALE Göran took the initiative to publish proceedings of the annual conferences. The proceedings of the second annual conference of the EALE in Berlin (1985) were published in a book co-edited with Matthias Graf von der Schulenburg; this book became a milestone in the history of European Law and Economics scholarship. Göran equally published an often quoted handbook on Economic Analysis of Environmental Policy and Law (jointly with Michael Faure). Moreover, Göran published
widely in many refereed journals, such as the following: Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics, European Journal of Law and Economics, Journal of Risk and Insurance and the Geneva Papers on Risk and Insurance. With the Geneva Association (publisher of the Geneva Papers) Göran developed a long-lasting connection. Thanks to the generous support of the previous secretary-general of the Geneva Association (Orio Giarini), the Geneva Association sponsors every second year a joint conference with the EALE, devoted to issues related to the economic analysis of liability and insurance. A selection of the papers is also published in a special issue of the Geneva Papers on Risk and Insurance, edited by members of the EALE. The first of the joint conferences between the EALE and the Geneva Association was organized by Göran in April 1986 and, thanks to Göran’s efforts, this nice bi-annual tradition has continued up until today. The most recent joint conference was held in June 2013 in Girona (Spain).

In his research, Göran was a highly creative “out of the box” thinker, as a result of which he was able to explore original ideas and bring economic analysis of law further. One example is his view that, differently from the utility maximization theory of insurance, insurance is also demanded in cases of risk neutrality, simply as a mechanism to reduce transaction costs (“The transactions costs theory of insurance: contracting impediments and costs”, Journal of Risk and Insurance, 1989). Göran equally showed that, compared to insurance, risk sharing agreements require relatively little information. The latter have the major advantage that ex ante information on probability and damage is not necessary as long as the participants in the pool know the individual risk of all members, as a result of which risk differentiation becomes possible. That is why risk sharing may be particularly attractive when actuarial information is lacking, as in the case of new risks (“Risk-sharing institutions for unpredictable losses”, JITE, 1999). Göran subsequently used those theoretical insights to formulate important policy advice, e.g. on how to structure compensation funds for nuclear accidents on the basis of a risk sharing agreement (“A European Nuclear Accident Pool”, Geneva Papers on Risk and Insurance, 2008).

Since 1998 until his retirement in 2008 Göran was professor of economics in the department of Management and Economics at Linköping University. In this capacity he also convinced Linköping University to become a partner in the European Master Programme in Law and Economics (EMLE). This gave EMLE students the opportunity to study Insurance Law and Economics and write their master thesis in this field until 2004, when (for bureaucratic reasons) Linköping University was not able to join the Erasmus Mundus network in which EMLE operates since then.

For more than ten years Göran was suffering from the Parkinson disease. Notwithstanding the fact that this illness caused a substantial limitation to his physical abilities, he kept on travelling with his
wife Gunilla to the annual conferences of the EALE and to the joint conferences with the Geneva Association. Even when speaking became difficult, Göran still wanted to intervene in the debate to present his path-breaking ideas. Also when one of us visited him at his home in Lund last year in November, he still discussed actively on the Law and Economics of insurance, accident law and environmental policy. Up until very recently Göran was developing original ideas for new papers and further research. Unfortunately, the disease did not allow him to pursue these many interesting initiatives further.

The EALE has lost his founding father and first president. For many of us, especially those who were active in the early days of the development of the Law and Economics in Europe, Göran Skogh’s death also means the loss of a great, loyal and warm friend.

We offer his wife Gunilla and his children Eric, Elin and Frida, their partners and Göran’s grandchildren our condolences and feelings of sympathy. The EALE will keep remembering this great Law and Economics scholar, who decisively facilitated and significantly contributed to the development of Law and Economics in Europe.

Roger Van den Bergh
Former President EALE (1987-2001)

Michael Faure
Former Secretary EALE (1988-2000)