

OFFICERS REPORT 1997 - 1998

XXth Annual Congress of the ESC - Vienna, Austria 1998 Annual Report of the Activities by the President and Secretary 1997-1998

Introduction

The activities of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) are expanding. Therefore, in addition to the established activities, the Board has given extra attention to :

- development of a strategy for the ESC
- update of the Statutes
- realisation of new publications by Working Groups
- initiation of a series of Policy Conferences
- co-operation with the European Community and other organizations.

Highlights were the XIXth European Congress of Cardiology in Stockholm and the first Policy Conference in the European Heart House in February 1998, as well as many meetings organized by our Working Groups

Strategic Planning of the ESC

With the help of the external members of the Consultative and Oversight Committee, particularly Mr Walter Trux, a series of discussions was initiated to develop a strategy to meet the growing activities of the Society and the related complexity.

The following strategic topics emerged :

The mission of the ESC might be broadened

The mission of the ESC is to improve the quality of life of people in Europe by reducing the impact of cardiovascular disease. In the discussions on this topic it was appreciated that quality of life does include : promote survival and absence of impairment by cardiovascular disease.

The ESC might extend and improve its external relations

For example with the European Union, the European Heart Network and the World Heart Federation (formerly ISFC). The decision was made to have a permanent representative of the ESC in Brussels.

The need for structural changes in the ESC organization

To allow further development of different activities, the respective committees should be able to act more independently with the Board focusing on overall strategic management of the Society. The results of discussions with Board members, some Presidents of National Societies, Working

Group Chairmen will be presented to the meeting of the Board with National Society Presidents and Working Group Chairmen in Vienna on August 21, 1998.

How can the ESC enhance the available resources (human and financial)

Several options will be addressed in the next year.

Congresses

The XIXth Congress of Cardiology in Stockholm was attended by 19,460 participants, including 14,101 active participants, 4,066 industry representatives, 907 accompanying persons and 386 press. It was organized together with the 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Association of European Paediatric Cardiologists (AEPC) The Stockholm weather was excellent, but was surpassed by the quality of the symposia and other sessions.

Future congresses

1999 August 28 - September 1 - Barcelona, Spain
2000 August 26 - 30 - Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Statutes of the ESC

The Statutes of the ESC have evolved over the past twenty years. A new structure for the Statutes was developed with an updated mission and purpose of the Society and an improved description of the membership of the Society. These new Statutes will be presented to the General Assembly of the ESC during the Congress in Vienna.

Working Groups

A meeting with the Working Group Chairmen was organized in the European Heart House, in connection with the first meeting of the Executive Scientific Committee on November 27th and 28th, 1997.

The important contribution of the Working Groups to the scientific development of the ESC, the congress programme and many meetings throughout Europe is acknowledged.

One major topic of discussion initiated at this meeting was the creation of councils or clusters of Working Groups that share a common interest.

New publications

On initiatives of the Working Group on Cardiac Pacing and the Working Group on Arrhythmias, as well as the Working Group on Heart Failure, two new ESC journals will be initiated, both starting with a first issue early 1999 :

-EUROPACE (European Journal for Pacing, Arrhythmias and Cardiac Electrophysiology), appointed Editors R. Sutton (UK) and L. Jordaens (Belgium), publisher WB Saunders.

-European Journal of Heart Failure, Editor J. Cleland (UK), publisher Elsevier.

Policy Conferences

A first Policy Conference was organized by the Committee on Scientific and Clinical Initiatives in the European Heart House on February 5th and 6th, 1998.

Participants, including the Presidents of the National Societies, discussed the re-use of devices, including medical aspects, and socio-economic aspects. A report of this first Policy Conference will be published in the European Heart Journal. Other Policy Conferences will be organized in coming years.

European Union

Contacts with the European Union have been improving.

The ESC has been successful to include cardiovascular disease as a topic for the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Union, which is being prepared.

Goals for programmes which might be supported by the European Union under the 5th Framework Programme may be expected early 1999.

The Board of the European Society of Cardiology realizes that closer co-operation with the European Heart Network (the organization of the National Heart Foundations) will be of mutual interest. Therefore a meeting of representatives of Boards of the organizations took place in Brussels on May 14th. A joint office will be established in Brussels to improve the contacts between both organizations and the European Union.

Co-operation with the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and the American Heart Association (AHA)

In addition to the now established Joint Symposia at the three major Cardiology Congresses, other areas of closer co-operation between the ESC and the North-American sister organizations have developed well.

CardioCollection will be established in 1998 as a publication on CD-ROM of the most recent three years of the European Heart Journal, the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, Circulation and Heart. In addition, a structure is being developed for on-line presentation of a series of journals, including the European Heart Journal and Cardiovascular Research, on Internet. Closer co-operation among the Societies and their publishers is required for such endeavour.

Education and Training Programme

From July 1997 - July 1998, the Education and Training Programme Committee organized 13 programmes in the European Heart House (intramural), as well as 5 programmes at other places in Europe (extramural) : Istanbul, Budapest, Tallinn, Shannon and Timosoara.

These extramural programmes were attended by a total number of 508 participants.

Unfortunately, a few planned programmes had to be withdrawn, because of lack of interest, which was partly due to programmes with similar topics being organized elsewhere by other organizations.

Diploma of European Cardiology

The European Board for the Specialty of Cardiology (EBSC) has made progress with the preparation to establish a diploma of European Cardiology, available for those who have completed an approved training programme. This will facilitate international exchange of qualified specialists.

Guidelines for Diagnosis and Cardiovascular Disease

The Committee for Scientific and Clinical Initiatives has initiated new Task Forces on the following topics :

- Revision of previous guidelines on the prevention of coronary artery disease and advice on their implementation
- Management of infective endocarditis
- Management of patients with chest pain
- Diagnosis and treatment on aortic dissection
- Diagnosis and treatment of pulmonary embolism
- Unstable angina pectoris
- Legal aspects of guidelines

In the year 1997 - 1998 reports were published in the European Heart Journal on the following subjects :

- The burden of cardiovascular diseases mortality in Europe
- The clinical role of magnetic resonance in cardiovascular disease
- The pre-hospital management of acute heart attacks
- Driving and heart disease

Fellowships

The Credentials Committee elected eighty seven new Fellows of the ESC (FESC).

The total number of Fellows has now reached the figure of 1223.

A Nurse Fellowship of the ESC has been established (NFESC) and this year for the first time six Nurse Fellows have been elected.

The Research and Training Fellowship Committee received 25 applications for Research and 18 for Training Fellowship and awarded 10 Research and 8 Training Fellowships, mostly to candidates from Eastern European countries.

Publications

European Heart Journal

The European Heart Journal is circulated to over 10,000 and possibly up to 15,000 following the Vienna Congress. The Journal continues to attract a large number of editorials and review articles as well as the increasingly highly regarded original articles. The impact factor is not increased due largely to a very large number of supplements published in 1995. In order to improve the impact factor in future years, supplements to the European Heart Journal will be published under a separate title "European Heart Journal Supplements". The first issue will be in January 1999 and will be distributed in the usual manner with the European Heart Journal.

The number of submitted articles continues to increase with an acceptance rate of original articles of about 25 %. The review process takes a month and publication time is 5 months from the time of final acceptance.

Over the past 12 months the number of supplements have risen dramatically as have requests for reprints and advertising. This has produced a substantial increase in revenue to the Society.

Cardiovascular Research

The submission of manuscripts to Cardiovascular Research is still increasing. The estimate for 1998 is 1,100 manuscripts, which again is more than in all preceding years. The acceptance rate has fallen to 25 %. Despite the low acceptance rate, the time between acceptance and publication has unfortunately increased to 6 or 7 months due to the large number of submissions. The time for the first editorial decision has further decreased to 26 days.

The impact factor of the journal has increased during recent years and was 3.26 in the last official report (1996).

Newsletter

The ESC Newsletter was distributed to all members of the ESC at four occasions during the past year. It contained information on ongoing activities within the Board and also communicated information from various Committees, Working Groups and activities with related organizations.

Finances

The Consultative and Oversight Committee (Finance Committee) has developed and adopted a new structure for financial reporting and planning. This has led to an improved financial planning and control. The financial situation of the ESC is favourable, particularly since the dispute with the French tax authorities has been settled. Accordingly, additional funds have become available to support new initiatives by the Society. Detailed information can be found in the Treasurer's report.

Concluding remarks

The structure and main activities of the ESC have been well established including the European Congress of Cardiology, the Working Groups, closer co-operation with the National Societies, the European Heart Journal, Cardiovascular Research, Education and Training Programme and development of guidelines for diagnosis and management of cardiovascular disease. While the organization needed for continuation of these activities might be strengthened, opportunities arise for new activities, including - but not limited to - electronic publications on CD-ROM and/or Internet, development of registries and databases on cardiovascular disease, closer co-operation with sister organizations on other continents, as well as with related organizations in Europe.

The Board is grateful for the active participation of many members of our Society in an increasing number of committees and related activities. The contribution of the staff at the European Heart House, under the leadership of the Managing Director Mr Wil Neijmann is acknowledged, as well as that of the Executive Secretary Mrs Wilma Thieme.

New Managing Director

Since Mr Neijmann, Managing Director of the ESC and ECOR, will retire by the end of 1999, a new Managing Director was sought with the help of different 'head-hunting' organizations. The

Board of the ESC is pleased to announce that Mr Alan Howard has accepted this challenging position.

We have enjoyed the many contacts with our members and with many others, and are confident that our successors will be able to continue to expand the activities of the Society, building on the firm base, which has been established.

Günter Breithardt, President
Maarten L. Simoons, Secretary
Vienna, Austria - August 1998