



A lifetime of specialist care

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To

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Application for the Position of President-Elect of the European Society of Cardiology

Dear Professor Casadei, dear Barbara,

With this letter; I would like to apply for the position of President-Elect of the *European Society of Cardiology (ESC)* for the ESC Board of 2022 – 2024.

Personal Background and Job Profile

As by Article 8.3 of the ESC Statues, I would consider myself eligible as I am currently serving as a voting member of the ESC Board 2020-2022, i.e. as ESC Secretary/Treasurer. Furthermore, I am FESC and do believe that I am, as required, a respected clinician (with practicing experience in the US, Switzerland and UK) and scientists (h-index Scopus 133) in cardiovascular medicine with an international network as reflected by numerous collaborations and invited lectures worldwide. Also, I do have vast experience in leading people effectively and constructively as mentor and/or supervisor in 6 academic institutions in Switzerland, the US and UK.

Thanks to senior management positions in 5 hospitals in Switzerland and the U.K., as founder of 3 start-ups, and leadership positions in 6 professional societies and foundations, I feel well prepared to eventually lead a large organisation such as the ESC. Specifically, I was head of the division of clinical pharmacology at the University Hospitals Basel, vice chairman of cardiology at the Inselspital Bern, director of cardiology at the University Hospital Zurich, chairman of the department of medicine at this institution and founder and chairman of the University Heart Center and the Center for Molecular Cardiology thereat. Since 2017, I am director of education, research & development at the Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals and I am academically affiliated at the Imperial College and Kings College in London, UK (for details see CV).

I was and I am still exposed to budgetary, financial and legal issues as director of diverse health care providers and of many research institutions. As founder and board member of start-up companies I was exposed to financial planning in a business context as well. Finally, I have been reviewer of academic institutions (e.g. chair, scientific advisory board, *Cientro Nacional de Investigaciones de Cardiologia*, Madrid, Spain; chief reviewer, Max Delbrück Research Center, Charité, Berlin-Buch, FRG; reviewer, Amsterdam Medical Center, Mainz University, FRG and Charles University, Prag, CZ) which gave me important insights in diverse academic and healthcare systems in different European countries.

Besides positions in the ESC (see below), I was president of the Swiss Society of Hypertension, board member of the European Society of Clinical Investigation, president of the Swiss Society of Cardiology and member of the education

committee of the British Cardiovascular Society (for details see CV).

Experience within the ESC

I proudly served for the ESC for many years, first as chairman of the then *Working Group (WG) on Coronary Circulation*, then as chairman of the Congress Program Committee and later as Vice President of the ESC WGs during the presidency of Jean-Pierre Bassand when we created the *ESC Associations* which are a true success story. For more than a decade I served with great pleasure as editor-in-chief of the *European Heart Journal* and chairman of the *ESC Publications Committee* and was, thanks to an outstanding team, able to increase its standing and reputation (from IF 8.9 to 29.9) and to create and expand the ESC Journal Family from 4 to currently 17 excellent journals, almost all with a respectable impact factor. Furthermore, I did and continue to edit the *ESC Textbook of Cardiovascular Medicine* with over 700 chapters in 64 sections together with John A. Camm, Gerald Maurer and Patrick W. Serruys now in its 3rd and soon 4th edition. In parallel, we created an electronic database (*ESC CardioMed*) which is continuously updated and part of the ESC membership scheme. Currently, I am ESC secretary/treasurer and thanks to this position I obtained deep insights into the financial management as well as the challenges and needs during the pandemic.

Application for ESC President Elect for 2022-2024

I would be highly motivated to further serve the ESC in a new position for the period of 2022 – 2024 as president elect and thereafter as ESC president 2024-2026. Thanks to my personal experience and my previous positions in the ESC, I do feel well prepared for these demanding terms. The currently continuously changing environment with uncertainty about upcoming political developments, changing funding policies and moving ethical and regulatory standards, a competent leadership providing good governance, stable finances and a vision for the future is of utmost importance. I am convinced that with my longstanding experience in leading positions of diverse institutions in different countries, I would bring the necessary competence and experience for such a position. Furthermore, my deep insights into the ESC thanks to my past commitments over two decades, would be of invaluable help as well. Finally, my institutions would allow me, if elected, to devote 25% and later 40% of my time to the ESC as required.

Vision for and Contribution to the ESC

The ESC went and continues to go through truly challenging times first and foremost due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but also due to the changing environment. First, we realized that the ESC due to its size and financial obligations does require a substantial and sustainable financial reserve. Furthermore, the pandemic reminded us again on the necessity of a broader financial basis of the ESC besides congress contributions from industry and registrations. Finally, we realized that the pandemic has and will change the way we will have to pursue our mission. and that a strategic review is truly necessary.

The ESC currently has 3 main revenue streams: (1) Congresses and meetings; (2) publications and (3) membership. Congresses and meetings are here to stay and are central to the ESC's mission, albeit in a hybrid form which does offer opportunities for further growth with webinars and outreach programmes. However, changing policies and compliance issues of industry and certain countries need to be closely watched to maintain and potentially increase this important source of income. The second and currently growing income stream are publications; this however is likely to be challenged by the upcoming open access requirements. Here we have to find either better contractual agreements with publisher(s) or altogether consider an ESC owned publishing company editing the 17 journals and 18 textbooks of the ESC. Thirdly, we have to aim at increasing professional memberships that have been introduced lately and have a great potential for growth provided the membership benefits meet the expectations of our members. The difficult search for a fourth revenue stream continues, but high quality, prospective and representative clinical registries (e.g. EuroHeart, Atlas among others) may provide such an opportunity.

A structural challenge for the ESC is the growth and diversification of cardiovascular medicine (CVM); indeed, cardiology has spread out – like a growing tree – into an increasing number of subspecialties. This is in line with our vision when we created the ESC Associations and later the ESC Councils. However, this development has and will unavoidably shift the weight from ESC central and general cardiologists to these constituent bodies of the subspecialties. Thus, to allow further growth of CVM and keep the society together (according to principle *l'union fait la force*) will be an important and delicate task for the leadership. We will have to find the sweet spot at which the ESC Associations and Councils can pursue their individual missions and to maintain the overall integrity of the society which was and remains a key success factor. A more effective involvement of the ESC Associations and Councils leadership in the ESC governance will be increasingly important. Particularly sensitive issues are budgetarian in nature, but also relate

to the ESC guidelines and their presentation and publication. Another issue, indirectly related to it, are increasing requests for new journals; also here we have to find a balance, i.e. between these valuable initiatives and the importance of maintaining journal quality for which the ESC brand stands. Indeed, the ESC Journal Family is already the largest of its kind and further products must fulfill a documented unmet scientific need, provide a convincing business plan and assure a good flow of worth-while manuscripts that live up to our quality standards.

Within this context, our relation with cardiac and CV surgeons needs consideration. Currently, CV surgeons have their own society (i.e. EACTS) and their own journal (i.e. Eur. J. Cardiothor. Surg.), but they are also involved in the ESC with their own WG. While the old generation of CV surgeons is quite reluctant to get closer to the ESC, the new generation is much more open. Indeed, it should grow together what belongs together and we should make attempts to foster that by involving their WG more effectively in suitable ESC projects, at our congresses and meetings as is common practice in many national societies already. With the new editor-in-chief of the Eur. J. Cardiothor. Surg. Matthias Siepe a better collaboration with the ESC Journal Family members should be attempted and might be feasible as well.

Besides journals, other important educational products of the ESC are textbooks and guidelines. Here, we need oversight to assure that all products are aligned and that the ESC does not convey different messages in its main and specialty textbooks. An important novel project will be the *Essentiels of ESC CardioMed*, a distillation of the content of the *ESC Textbook of Cardiovascular Medicine* for trainees aiming at passing the European Cardiology examination. Eventually a smaller *ESC Student's Modul Cardiology* would be nice to eventually provide educational products throughout an entire academic career from the medical student to the trainee and eventually the consultant or professor. In the long run, the publication strategy has to consider completely different ways of providing education, i.e. within interactive platforms rather than traditional printed textbooks.

Finally, the ESC textbooks must be aligned with the ESC Guidelines and hence must also have an electronic version allowing for regular updates as new recommendations come out. Here, a process proposed by the editors already should be finalized and implemented to assure that ESC products speak with one voice on clinically relevant issues. The conflicts of interests of guideline members and chairpersons in particular, but also of editors are an increasingly sensitive issue that need to be addressed and continuously adapted to the changing societal expectations. Importantly, rules on who should abstain from voting or manuscript handling, respectively under which circumstances and in which topics should be defined proactively and made transparent to maintain the ESCs credibility and reputation.

Please find enclosed my short as well as an extended CV with a list of selected publications, the Declaration-of-Interest and the signed Code-of-Conduct. I further enclose the support letters of my national societies, i.e. the *British Cardiovascular Society* and *Swiss Society of Cardiology* that might have reached you already separately.

Thank you for considering my application. With best regards.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas F. Lüscher, FESC, FRCP
Professor of Cardiology, Imperial College,
Kings College and University of Zurich

Enclosure: Short CV
 CV with selected publications
 Declaration-of-Interest
 Signed Code-of-Conduct
 Support letter by the *British Cardiovascular Society*
 Support letter by the *Swiss Society of Cardiology*

