

OFFICERS REPORT 1996 - 1997

XIXth Annual Congress of the ESC - Stockholm, Sweden 1997 Annual Report of the Activities by the President and Secretary 1996-1997

Introduction

The Board of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) has met seven times since the General Assembly in Birmingham August 28, 1996 : four times in the European Heart House, once in Birmingham, once in Mannheim and once in Stockholm. The Board meetings in Mannheim and in Stockholm were arranged at the time of the Annual meetings of the German and Swedish Societies of Cardiology respectively.

In November 1996, the first meeting of the Executive Scientific Committee was arranged, partly overlapping with the meeting between the Board and the Chairmen of the Working Groups of the ESC. This allowed a more thorough and more efficient exchange of ideas and initiatives for preparation of the programme of the European Congress of Cardiology in Stockholm 1997.

In February 1997, the Board and the Presidents of the National Societies of Cardiology met at the European Heart House at the same time as the Board of the International Society and Federation of Cardiology (ISFC) and the Board of the European Atherosclerosis Society (EAS). The exchange of experiences and opinions among the Board members of these different organizations was much appreciated and will be repeated regularly.

In June 1997, the first Registry Conference was organized at the European Heart House to exchange information and initiate cooperation among organizers of different European international and national registries and databases on cardiac diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.

During the last year several activities have been taken by a few Working Groups and by different commercial organizations to initiate new publications on cardiology in Europe, using classic printed formats, but also CD-ROM and Internet. The Board is actively pursuing these initiatives and has adopted guidelines for publications owned by the ESC and its Working Groups and publications by others in association with the ESC.

The Education and Training Programme has been expanded. In addition to 17 teaching programmes organized in 1996 in the European Heart House, two external programmes were organized in Budapest and Warsaw. Since these were successful and appreciated by the participants, such external programmes will be developed further.

A new series of Guidelines for Diagnosis and Management of Cardiovascular Disease have been developed under the guidance of the Committee for Scientific and Clinical Initiatives. These will be presented in detail at the Congress in Stockholm.

Initiatives were taken to improve and intensify contacts with the administration of the European Community in Brussels.

At the beginning of the term of office of this Board, the President presented a Policy and Strategy Document for the Society for 1996 - 1998. In the following pages, different components of this policy and strategy are reviewed in more detail.

1) To increase the role of basic research in the ESC

Cardiovascular Research has now been established as the basic science journal of the European Society of Cardiology. Fellows of the Society and congress attendants may choose to receive either Cardiovascular Research or the European Heart Journal. Representatives from basic science play a major role in the Executive Scientific Committee and have been invited to participate in the Education and Training Programme Committee, as well as in the Committee for Scientific and Clinical Initiatives. The links with the International Society for Heart Research (ISHR) and the European Atherosclerosis Society (EAS) are being tightened.

2) To have continuity in the expansion of the activities of the Working Groups

The contribution of the Working Groups to the development of the programme of the Congress in Stockholm has improved through a joint meeting with the Working Group Chairmen and the Executive Scientific Committee.

Several initiatives by Working Groups to establish publications in their field are under consideration. The organizational arrangements between the Society and the Working Groups have improved and the financial arrangements are now fully transparent and according to the legal requirements.

3) To continue and expand the existing links with other major Societies

- Joint programmes with the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and the American Heart Association (AHA) in the respective congresses continue to be successful.
- The global cardiology network is being developed on Internet, developing the activities of the ESC, ACC, AHA, as well as the other continental Societies in a harmonized way.
- The President represents the ESC in the Executive Board of the International Society and Federation of Cardiology (ISFC). The Board met with the ISFC Board during the European Heart House Days in February 1997.
- Closer links are being established with the European Atherosclerosis Society and the International Society for Heart Research, as well as with the European Heart Network.

4) To expand our educational activities

The education and training programme in the European Heart House is expanding, it draws an increasing number of participants. In addition, extramural programmes are being developed in various Eastern, but also Western European countries. The arrangements for "sponsorship" of different meetings in Europe have been updated.

5) To develop a European Diploma of Cardiology

The European Board for the Specialty of Cardiology has made some progress towards the development of this European Diploma. It may take another year before all arrangements are being finalized.

6) To develop and implement the CME system

Credit points for Continuing Medical Education (CME) have been established in a few European countries. The courses organized by the Education and Training Programme Committee are part of the recognized activities for continuing medical education.

For the first time, the European Congress of Cardiology in Stockholm will provide CME credit points for American participants. Little progress, however, has been made on development of a Europeanwide CME system.

7) To assist in developing, fostering and improving cardiology on all levels in Eastern European countries

Contacts between Eastern, Middle and Western European countries, in part through the activities of the ESC. Special funds have been made available to allow colleagues from Eastern Europe to participate in the Education and Training Programmes in the European Heart House. In addition, Research and Training Fellowships are awarded particularly to fellows from Eastern Europe.

8) To establish a global computer communication network

The global cardiology network is being developed as a joint project of the ESC, the ACC and the AHA. In addition, arrangements are being developed with a publisher to allow access for our members to all major cardiology journals through Internet.

Much information about the structure and the activities of the ESC is available on our own web (internet) pages at <http://www.escardio.org> (see last page).

9) To establish a network for quality assurance programmes and research

A Committee for Databases and Telecommuncation for Quality of Care and Research has been established.

A first Registry Conference has been organized at the European Heart House as a meeting of the organizers of different registries and databases in various European countries focussing on cardiac surgery, percutaneous coronary interventions, radiofrequency ablation, pacemakers and ICD.

A few European registries have been successful (pacemakers), while others are to be developed further.

10) To contribute to the quality of patient care by developing up-to-date guidelines and recommendations

The Committee for Scientific and Clinical Initiatives (SCI) has expanded the Guidelines for Diagnosis and Management of Cardiovascular Disease.

Currently Guidelines are available on : The Management of Stable Angina Pectoris, The Treatment of Heart Failure, The Management of Acute Myocardial Infarction, The Prevention of Coronary Heart Disease in Clinical Practice and Guidelines for Diagnosis of Heart Failure, as well as on other topics. Further details can be found on our website (<http://www.escardio.org>).

11) To achieve a greater involvement of the ESC in political and scientific decisions of the European Union

More intensive contacts have been developed with the administration of the European Union. In particular, it has been our goal to establish firmly the place of cardiovascular medicine in the 5th Framework programme of the European Community. A position paper has been submitted to the EU administration.

12) To increase the awareness of the public through the media of the impact of cardiovascular disease on overall morbidity and mortality

A report has been prepared by the Task Force on Cardiovascular Mortality and Morbidity Statistics : "the Burden of Cardiovascular Diseases Mortality in Europe". This will be presented at the European Congress of Cardiology in Stockholm and published in the European Heart Journal. Other similar initiatives are under preparation.

13) To increase the role of the ESC in the media through the publications, press and public relations committee

The main activity of the publications, press and public relations committee is at the European Congress of Cardiology. The establishment of the global cardiology network (internet) and close cooperation with one or several publishers in internet may help to further this policy. Preparations are being completed to present both the European Heart Journal and Cardiovascular Research with full text on the Internet. Initiatives to make the public aware of these activities are being developed.

The above items are the topics from the Policy and Strategy document.

In addition, please find other important information from the past year.

ESC Congresses

Birmingham 1996

The total number of participants was 15.403 of which 11.679 physicians, nurses and other scientists, 581 accompanying persons and 3.143 exhibitors. The number of countries represented was 109.

The scientific programme was rated excellent, although several issues were raised regarding the accommodation and transport in the Birmingham environment.

Stockholm 1997

This year a total of 7419 abstracts have been received (from 75 countries), of which 2712 will be presented either as oral presentations or as posters. The number of abstracts submitted is still growing and the quality is judged to be adequate.

Also the exhibition area will exceed the area from previous congresses.

Future Venues and 'new' Dates

Please note that in the future the Congress will start on Saturday afternoon and finish Wednesday noon. Future congress will be held in :

1998 August 22 - 26 Vienna, Austria

1999 September 4 - 8 Barcelona, Spain

2000 August 26 - 30 Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Executive Scientific Committee

The procedures of the Executive Scientific Committee have been firmly established. Interaction with the Working Groups has been improved through a joint meeting of the Executive Scientific Committee with the Working Group Chairmen in the European Heart House. The 1997 Congress is organized together with the 32nd Annual General Meeting of the Association of European Paediatric Cardiologists (AEPC). Therefore, extra representatives of the AEPC have been involved in preparation of the Congress.

Amendment of Statutes and By-Laws

During the General Assembly in Birmingham a new version of the Statutes has been accepted. Yet, it has become apparent that these statutes need further modification, particularly to clarify the purpose of the Society and its membership. A proposal for such modification will be developed in the next year and presented to the General Assembly in Vienna 1998.

ESC Committees

The Board of the ESC has established a number of committees to assist in the management of the Society. These can be found at the end of this report.

Two new committees were initiated :

- a publications, press and public relations committee to oversee all activities in this field, throughout the year
- a committee for databases and telecommunication for quality of care and research, to discuss and establish the means and the rules for use of computer technology within the Society structures and to establish a network of databases and registries in Europe.

Publications of the ESC

European Heart Journal

During the year 1996 the European Heart Journal has received 847 submissions. The average time from submission to decision was 35 days, while the average time from revision to decision was 11 days. The publication time after acceptance was 8.2 months in 1996.

Cardiovascular Research

The submission to Cardiovascular Research is at present increasing. The estimate for 1997 is 900 manuscripts, which is 150 more than in the preceding years. Thusfar, the acceptance rate was 35 %. The time for the first editorial decision has stabilized at 27 days. The delay between acceptance and publication is 4 - 5 months. The impact factor of the journal has increased within a couple of years and amounts to 3.26 for 1996.

European Video Journal of Cardiology

Publication of the European Video Journal of Cardiology has been concluded by the end of 1996. The Board regrets that this initiative has not been successful, and believes that new initiatives for electronic publication using CD-ROM and Internet may be more successful.

Newsletter

The Newsletter of the ESC is produced with three or four issues a year. It contains information on organizational aspects regarding the Society and different education, training programmes as well as other meetings.

Finances

The Consultative and Oversight Committee (Finance Committee) has met three times to review the financial procedures, financial results and budgets of the Society and its associated organizations (European Congress Organization, European Cardiology Congress Organization, European Heart House).

On two occasions the Committee met with the official auditors of the Society.

The financial reporting structure has been modified to allow better insight in the expenses and income related to various activities.

The Treasurer's report is appended.

Fellowship of the ESC for 1997

This year 120 applications were received of which 105 were accepted upon recommendation by the Credentials Committee. The present number of Fellows of the ESC is now 1139.

The Board endorses the initiative by the Working Group on Cardiovascular Nursing to create a Nursing Fellowship of the ESC.

Research and Training Fellowships

Out of a total of 45 applications (23 for Research and 22 for Training Fellowship), 10 were approved for a Research and 9 for a Training Fellowship. This involves a total cost of FF 1.500.000. Again, a significant proportion of this sum will be provided by the ESC Foundation of America.

Concluding remarks

This report, summarizing the work by the Board of the European Society of Cardiology and many committees during the period August 1996 - July 1997, demonstrates that the Society continues to grow and continues to foster relations with other professional and political organizations in Europe.

The participation of many members of the ESC in these activities must be acknowledged. Their willingness to contribute to the Society's activities illustrates that the Society is indeed representing European cardiology to the interest of its members.

The Board is grateful to the staff in the European Heart House, which has now expanded to 31 persons, under leadership of our Managing Director Mr Wil Neijmann and to the Executive

Secretary of the ESC, Mrs Wilma Thieme. Their competent professionalism and enthusiasm have greatly facilitated the various activities of the Society during the past year.

Günter Breithardt, President
Maarten L. Simoons, Secretary
Stockholm, August 1997