



## Newsletter from the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology

### The Association for European Paediatric Cardiology in the third Millennium

Dr. O. Daniëls (Secretary-General, Association for European Paediatric Cardiology)

May I start by wishing all readers of *Cardiology in the Young* a happy new year and a prosperous Millennium! Within the Association, we have many new things planned for the coming year, and we wish to take this opportunity to share them with you.

First and foremost, there is the annual meeting to be held in Strasbourg from June 14 through 17. The details of the programme can be found on our web page [www.aepc.org](http://www.aepc.org). They are listed under "Future Meetings". In our opinion, it is an exciting programme. If you are planning to come, then subscribe soon, because already much interest is being generated.

We start on Tuesday June 13 with the pre-congress programme. In the morning, a symposium has been organised by the AGA Medical Corporation which will deal with Interventional Cardiology. In the afternoon, a session has been arranged by the Advisory Professional Committee to consider our professional affairs in Europe. Items for discussion are the topics of continuing medical education and professional development, with the emphasis on the criteria needed for institutes offering training in paediatric cardiology, as well as those who profess to be the trainers. Proposals have already been formulated by Béat Friedli, the secretary of the Advisory Professional Committee and Board of National Delegates. These, too, are published on our web page, so all those interested in attending this session can view the proposals well in advance. After the discussions to be held in the pre-congress session, the points will be discussed more formally in our Business meeting. At this meeting, we will also discuss strategies for the crucial topic of the recognition of paediatric cardiology as a mono-speciality. We encourage all members of the

Association to attend these important meetings.

Wednesday is the day devoted to the activities of the working groups. Then, on Thursday we open the scientific sessions of the 36<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology. For our junior members, and for students younger than 27 years, we are offering registration at half price, along with the option of accommodation in inexpensive hotels.

Members of the Association should note that, with the inexorable passage of time, several positions will shortly become vacant on the Council. First, there is the position of President Elect. As required in our Constitution, we are inviting nominations from the members of the Association. At the same time, the Council makes a nomination for this position. It is an honour and pleasure for me to have received this nomination. We have achieved much in recent years, but there is still much to be done. If elected by the Association, I pledge myself to achieving these things. What do I have in mind? The Association has grown significantly over the past few years and the Annual Meetings have concomitantly become bigger and better. The Council has plans to develop a more professional organisation with a full-time central secretariat. There also needs to be a stronger emphasis on professional affairs, and on the assessment of quality. This aspect is now expected by patients, by governments, and by the providers of health care. But it is those of us working in the medical profession itself who should oversee all these aspects. If we ignore the assessment of quality, it will be forced upon us. So, we should willingly become involved in the process. This does not mean that we should restrict ourselves to ensuring continuous progress in the medical field itself, so-called Continuing Medical Education. We must also enter the arena of setting up our profession in the most appropriate way. This last process, within the United Kingdom, is called Continuing

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Professional Development. The process now achieves greater significance, since it could prove the key if our profession is to be recognised as a mono-speciality. The Council has already discussed the need properly to oversee Professional Development.

Moreover, it is crucial that the Association promotes activities for all working in the field of paediatric cardiology. It was for that reason that, some years ago, we abandoned our category of Associate membership and opened Ordinary membership to all medical and other scientific graduates who are committed to the practice and advancement of Paediatric Cardiology and closely related fields in Europe. In the field of congenital heart diseases, it is crucial that we all work closely together. Processes that enhance the quality of this work are essential. We need to ensure that everybody is able to make their contribution.

We must also realise that, if Paediatric Cardiology is to be recognised as a speciality in its own right, this is not merely a matter for the European Union or Brussels. It is equally important that our specialty becomes recognised within the individual countries. It is here where we can help each other, and where the crucial co-ordination can be provided by the Association for European Paediatric Cardiology. In my opinion, these topics have never been more important for all of us. It is essential we all give them our attention. Rest assured that, should I become President-elect, they will have all of my attention.

In the year 2000, we must also elect a new Secretary-General. This is because I leave office, and I am not eligible for re-election. A new Councillor is also needed to replace Erkki Pesonen, who has similarly completed his term of office. The Council is delighted to nominate Ingrid Oberhansli to become the new secretary-general. We all know Ingrid very well. She has always been deeply involved in our activities, and is well aware of what is required for the future. For the new Councillor, the Council has nominated Grazyna Brezinska-Raiszys, from Warsaw.

We also take this opportunity of reminding our members that, whilst the Council is obliged to make nominations for officers and councillors, such nominations can also be made directly by you, the members. The procedure concerning nominations is fully explained within our Constitution.

The Council of the Association begins the process for election of President by inviting nominations from the Ordinary and Senior members, and by announcing its own nominations, at least 4 months before the Annual General Meeting of the year preceding the Annual Meeting at which the

new President will take office. The process continues as follows:

- Nominations must be received by the Secretary-General at least three months before the Annual General Meeting. They must be signed by ten Ordinary or Senior members from three or more countries.
- 2 months before the Annual Meeting, ballot papers will be mailed to all Ordinary members.
- The ballot papers must have been returned and received by the Secretary-General at least two weeks before the meeting.

Similarly, to elect the Secretary-General, Scientific Secretary, Treasurer and Councillors, the existing Council is required to invite nominations from the Ordinary and Senior members, and to announce its own nominations, at least four months before the Annual meeting. These nominations must be signed by five Ordinary or Senior members from two or more countries, and should be received by the Secretary-General at least four weeks before the next Annual General Meeting. Voting will take place by secret ballot at the Annual Business Meeting.

I also take this opportunity to bring up some additional matters.

For the year 2000, we have been pleased to receive a grant from friends of the Association "in memory of Stanley Marrache". This grant, comprising the sum of 30,000 french francs, is offered to a young cardiologist, not older than 35 years, who is experienced and actively working in the field of Fetal Cardiology. The successful applicant will be performing, or preparing, either a fundamental research project, or a multicentric clinical study, related to fetal cardiology. This can involve the morphologic, genetic, molecular biologic or clinical areas. The proposed study must be described in a maximum of 12 pages, with 30 lines per page and 60 characters per line, and be submitted in English. The submissions will be assessed by a jury made up of 3 members of the Working Group for Fetal Cardiology existing within the Association, together with the President and the Scientific Secretary of the Association. The applications must be submitted to Dr G. Tulzer, the secretary of the Working Group. His address is: Children's Hospital of Linz, Krankenhausstrasse 26, A-4020 Linz, Austria. He can also be contacted by E-mail at [g.tulzer@eunet.at](mailto:g.tulzer@eunet.at). The original application, together with four copies, must be received not later than 30 March 2000. The decision of the jury will be announced at the business meeting of the Association in Strasbourg, and the grant will be awarded at that time.

The Advisory Professional Committee has considered, and sanctioned, upcoming meetings, congresses, and courses for Credit Points for Continuing Medical Education according to the recognised international standards. The results of this exercise are posted on our web page. Anybody wishing to be granted such credit for an international meeting should send all relevant information about the programme to the Secretary-General of the Association. The material must be delivered in printed and digital format. Acquisition of data in digital form is necessary to avoid introducing mistakes when setting up the web page and disseminating the information to other committee members.

The Coding Committee has worked hard. The Long and Short lists have now been printed in a special January supplement of *Cardiology in the Young*. These lists are also published on our web page. We will send a copy of the supplement to all centres who responded initially to the inquiries made by the Coding Committee. Copies will also be available in Strasbourg for interested members of the Association.

Applications for new membership, and for certificates for recognition as a European Paediatric Cardiologist, must be sent to the National Delegate before the first of October each year, with

a copy to the Secretary-General.

In addition to these important topics, we will also need to discuss membership fees for Senior members at the forthcoming Business meeting. As presently decreed in the Constitution, Senior members must pay 50 Swiss francs each year, but must pay the regular annual fee for an Ordinary member in years in which they choose to attend the Annual meeting. This system is not working. In future, therefore, the Council proposes that Senior members simply pay 50 Swiss francs each year. If this meets with the approval of the membership, then we will need to change the Constitution. We are presently discussing the situation concerning Industrial members and sponsors.

As the Association becomes larger and more active, it is also important that we exchange ideas, proposals, information, and so on, in the most efficient and economical way. For that reason, I suggest that every member, if possible, should have an e-mail address, and that this is known at the secretariat. Fax services are too costly, and take too much time for those who presently undertake the secretarial duties.

As I indicated at the beginning of my letter, there is much to achieve. But with appropriate support, we are convinced that all can be done, and relatively swiftly. Wishing all of us a good future.