



European Society for Artificial Organs

ESAO Newsletter - 2008

From the Past President and 2008 Congress Organiser

Firstly, I should like to thank all the Board Members and Members of the Society for the support and trust they gave me during these past two years of my Presidency, which terminated with the organisation and performance of the 35th Annual Meeting of the European Society for Artificial Organs. This ESAO Congress was successfully held in Geneva from 3-6 September. In the name of the Society, I would also like to thank the Past-President, Gerhard Rakhorst, who introduced a series of new activities to our Society, among others the successful ESAO Winter School. Gerhard is now stepping down from the Board. My thanks also go to Heinrich Schima, Secretary General, who is now President-elect and my congratulations to Birgit Glasmacher for her election as General Secretary, as well as to Jan Wojcicki in his continuing position as

Treasurer and, of course, to our "eminence grise" Joerg Vienken. I am sure with this new team, under the Presidency of Bart Meyns, the Society will continue to flourish.

During these two years, the main achievements can be listed as follows:

The **International Journal of Artificial Organs** has become the Official Journal of the Society, and a new contract has been signed with Wichtig Editore for the next three years. The ESAO would also like to thank Claudio Ronco for his excellent work as Editor-in-Chief of our Journal during the past years. We now welcome Gerardo Catapano as the new Editor-in-Chief and wish him all the best. The introduction of an electronic system for manuscript submission and peer-review process will be of major benefit to our Journal, and serve both the editorial office and the submitters of articles. Ms Zucchetti has been very instrumental in finalising all these innovations, which certainly will improve the impact factor of the IJAO.



Fig. 1 - From left: B.H. Walpoth, B. Glasmacher, B. Meyns

Members and Corporate Membership have always been a key issue for our Society and Jan Wojcicki, as well as Ingrid Ledebø, should be thanked for their continuous efforts. Currently, several options to increase membership, especially from students and young scientists are discussed in the Board, one option being to give an automatic 1-year membership to participants of the Annual Meeting.

The **ESAO Winter Schools** are now well established and continue to attract interest also from our younger members. It is customary to address one or two topics related to artificial organs and we are indebted to all the speakers from various fields who participate in the Winter Schools on an

Fig. 2 - ESAO Symposium Speakers, Amsterdam.



honorary basis. This is to express our thanks to the personality of the Chairman of the Education Working Group, Dieter Falkenhagen and his continuous efforts. The next Winter School will be held in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, from March 5-7, 2009 and will be organized by Prof. Ponikvar from Ljubljana.

ESAO Symposia at Affiliated Society Meetings have been emphasized during my Presidency. A total of six such symposia were held at the following meetings: Academy of Sciences in Skopje, Regenerative Medicine in Leipzig, IFAO-JSAO in Osaka, World Congress on Biomaterials in Amsterdam, ASAIO in San Francisco and TERMIS in Porto. All these symposia have been very well received and created new contacts, ties and links, not only with sister societies, but also with societies working in complementary fields.

The **35th ESAO Annual Congress** took place in Geneva, Switzerland, 3-6 September, 2008 on the theme *"Towards future biomedical technologies"*. The congress was supported by the three Universities of the Arc Lemanic, namely, Geneva, Lausanne and the EPFL. It was hosted by the Medical Faculty and the University Hospital of Geneva, giving the physicians of the hospital the possibility to participate actively in the meeting. Further to this, the venue was ideally located in the centre of the town

and thanks to the ghastly weather, all the conferences were very well attended!

The congress was attended by nearly 500 people coming from 34 countries, with the highest participation from Switzerland, followed by Germany, Italy, Japan, USA and Poland. The registration of ESAO members was astonishingly low, contrasting with the many students who attended.

The scientific program was of high quality, thanks to the numerous abstracts received and the outstanding plenary and symposia speakers. Next to the traditional Corporate Members Symposium, there were 12 Plenary Speakers, 6 Affiliated Society Symposia, 6 Lunch supported Symposia, 3 Special Symposia, 2 Postgraduate Courses and 5 Working Group Sessions. Many thanks to the Working Group leaders for their excellent work. Additionally, there were 102 Oral and 217 Poster presentations. The leading topics this year were related to Regenerative Medicine, Bioartificial Kidney and Dialysis, Cardiac-assist Devices and Cardiovascular Implants, and Biomaterials.

The **ESAO-Wichtig-Research Award 2008** was given *ex aequo* to Sunni Eloit from the University of Gent in Belgium and to Benjamin Nottelet from the University of Geneva, Switzerland.



Fig. 3 - Professor Christian Cabrol.

Of course such a Congress could not have been organised without the Sponsors; we were very fortunate to have more than 40 sponsors and exhibitors whom we would like to thank very much once again.

During this year's Presidential Dinner, Professor Christian Cabrol, a European pioneer in heart transplantation and support, was awarded the Honorary Membership of our Society.

Musical highlights of the congress included traditional Swiss yodel as well as classical virtuoso music by the Quatuor Terpsycordes.



Fig. 4 - Congress Organiser with Swiss Yodelers.

The Presidency and the organising of the ESAO Annual Meeting was a great pleasure for me personally, a challenge and a lot of work, but was rewarded by the achievements during these two years. I felt especially honoured by very positive feed-back from the Congress participants.

I wish the new Board a lot of success for the future and all the best for our Society, and look forward to seeing you all at the next Winter School, and especially at the next Annual Congress in Compiègne, France, 2-5 September 2009 which will be run by Cecile Legallais and her team.

Beat Walpoth, MD