



Association for European Paediatric Cardiology

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Eero Jokinen (Secretary-General); András Szatmári (President)

A LOT HAS HAPPENED DURING THE COURSE OF THE year. More new members than ever have joined the Association over a period of 12 months, with a total of 123 new members joining in 2006. We are delighted that 46 of them were junior members. We are now a stronger Association than ever, with a total of 800 members. Taking note of these increased numbers, we have invested this year in providing appropriate services for membership. We have developed our web page further, and it has now new functions. An important area of priority has been training in Paediatric Cardiology. After the Association accepted, in Copenhagen in 2005, the recommendations for training in General Paediatric Cardiology, the Council has subsequently accepted recommendations for training in echocardiography and cardiac magnetic resonance imaging. The first examination for accreditation in congenital echocardiography will be held during the annual meeting of the European Association of Echocardiography, which will take place very shortly in Prague, in December 2006. The working group for imaging has been actively involved in designing and organizing this examination. We are especially grateful to Luc Mertens for his excellent work in this regard. It is our ambition, as an Association, not only to make recommendations for training, but also to make it possible for our members to fulfill the recommendations. With this in mind, different working groups of the Association have organized training courses for our junior members. Over the past year, we organized a training course in haemodynamics and catheterization, held in Budapest, Hungary, in April, and a course in echocardiography, organized in Leuven, Belgium, in September. We have now planned several further courses to take place in 2007. A course devoted to morphology will be held in Leiden, The Netherlands, in January, followed by a course on arrhythmias in Leipzig, Germany, in April. We will then hold a further course on echocardiography, again in Leuven, Belgium, in September. All the courses held thus far have been well attended, and the evaluations show

that the participants have been well satisfied by their content. The courses are designed to be of small size, and affordable, in terms of fees as well as for accommodation and travelling expenses. We thus urge the trainers to encourage their fellows to participate in these courses, and further to offer to participate in the faculty of such courses, so that we can ensure that the courses are taught by the top experts in the different subspecialties of paediatric cardiology and its related disciplines.

The website

We commenced our web-based data base in 2006. This has made it possible further to develop the services provided for our members. It is now possible to pay the annual subscription on-line. Council encourages all members to make use of the new option, which has been made easy and safe to use. To make on-line payments, however, members must first ensure that they are registered with the Association. This is achieved through the membership information area of the web page of the Association <http://www.aepc.org>. At the time of registration, we would also ask all our members to check the data stored relative to themselves by the Association, and to make any necessary amendments.

There is also an additional link in the information area to change addresses, if this is necessary. Using this link, it is possible for members also to change their address if they are already registered, but the existing address is incorrect. It is crucially important that we, as an Association, know the correct addresses of any members who might recently have moved their affiliations. Only if the Association holds the correct addresses can we ensure that all members receive not only information about our activities, but also their issues of *Cardiology in the Young*, which should now be distributed to all members who have paid their dues. When registering, members should also mark the working group to which they wish to belong. This is easy to accomplish when paying the annual

subscription. We are disturbed to note that, currently, less than half of our members have indicated the working group they wish to support. Our working groups are the backbone of the Association. Within these groups, the top experts of the different sub-specialties meet and discuss further their activities. Membership of a working group permits all our members the opportunity to determine the future direction of the Association, and each member can also be a member of one working group. It is our intention to provide all the individual working groups with their own special page on the web page. Any member with thoughts on this process is encouraged to make contact directly with the Secretary-General.

Annual payment

The Association is able to provide all its services only for members who have paid their annual subscription. The annual fee for ordinary members is 150 euros, while junior members pay an annual fee of 80 euros. Within these annual dues is included the subscription to Cardiology in the Young, as well as sponsorship of one working group. Under any circumstance, this is an outstanding bargain. In addition, however, payment of the annual subscription permits members to enjoy reduced fees for registration for the Annual Meeting and training courses, as well as free use of the web-based services.

Our web-based data base now enables the Officers of the Association to monitor precisely the payment of the annual subscription. It is a sad consequence, but one that is essential, that we will need to inactivate the benefits of all those members who have not paid their dues by the stated time. Services will then only be reactivated after all the missing fees have been paid. Thus, any members who find that they are not receiving their copies of the Journal, or that they are unable to register on the web page, should check that

- the address given in the website is correct
- the annual subscription has been paid.

Should there still be any uncertainty, the member should feel free to make direct contact with the Secretary-General.

Working time proposal

A new working time directive has now been processed by the European Union. The directive can be found on the web page of the European Union at <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c10418.htm>. The European Union of Medical Specialists is now requesting the opinion of different medical associations

about this planned directive. As paediatric cardiologists, or specialists in related disciplines, we should act now. This directive will have a deeper influence on our profession than any other law or directive issued during the last decades. Surgeons in particular within the European Union of Medical Specialists have expressed concern with regard to the quality of future training should the working time directive become mandatory.

In several European countries, there is a national agreement about the limits for working time for doctors, and these agreements are, more or less, quite close to that of the proposed one. The existing limits of working time have thus far produced some minor difficulties in training, but our way of working has been changed, and sharing the work load between seniors and juniors has also been amended. There is, however, at least one big threat for our profession in the proposed directive. In the proposal of the European Union, all the time the doctor is on call will be counted as active working time, even if the physician or surgeon on call is at home and waiting. It is easy to calculate that those on call for one week-end will not be permitted to work further over the following two weeks! Should this become law, then we will soon be required to do no more than stay on call a couple of times each month! Thus, there are good points, but also significant risks in this working time proposal.

All our members, therefore, as well as all other interested parties, should read carefully the proposed working time directive, and pass on their opinions to their National Delegate. He or she will then inform the Council. The Council will work attentively with other specialties within the European Union of Medical Specialists to provide the medical community with proposals that make exercise of the medical profession possible, even in the future. We also suggest that all interested parties should inform their national members of the Parliament of the European Union about the possible risks of the proposal for our specialty.

New Officers

One Councillor and the Scientific Secretary will need to be replaced in 2007. All our members should now be thinking about possible candidates for these positions. Nominations for these officers must be signed by five ordinary members from two or more countries, and received by the Secretary-General at least four months before the next Annual Meeting.

The Secretary-General will send all active members a form for nominations with the newsletter at the beginning of 2007. We are anticipating multiple nominations.

Annual meeting in Warsaw

Please mark now in your calendar the dates for the Annual Meeting to be held in 2007. The dates are 16 through 19 of May, and the meeting will be held in Warsaw, Poland. Please visit the official web page of the Annual Meeting at <http://www.aepc2007.pl/>.

There is also a link to this page on the home page of the Association.

In closing our Newsletters for 2006, we hope you all will have a peaceful and relaxing Holiday Season, and we wish you a merry Christmas, and a happy and prosperous 2007!