

## May 2014, a very special month

Jean Fajadet, MD, *President EAPCI*

For those of us in the interventional community, May is the greatest of all months because it is in May that we come together in Paris for EuroPCR - the largest educational meeting in interventional cardiology worldwide - and the meeting which helps define our work throughout the year.

This year's EuroPCR will be very special for our association, because it is during EuroPCR that the direction of the EAPCI will change hands – we renew our entire Board – renewing, at the same time, our commitment to the future. In this column I would like to take the opportunity to look over what we have achieved during these last three years together and invite Stephan Windecker, our next President, to summarise his own goals.

The EAPCI is arguably a young association – having been founded in 2006 – but the hard and dedicated work of our leaders, the innovations and accomplishments that we have seen since its founding, are impressive. We are not merely arriving at a new level of maturity, but I can say with confidence that we have, over these last three years, carefully and diligently constructed a lasting institution with a firm foothold in the present, with an eye to the future of our discipline and our ability to offer our patients the best care possible.

### Keyword: strength

When we think of keywords to describe the EAPCI today we think of our association's strength and maturity as a professional organisation, our ability to work successfully together. We see the EAPCI's increasing visibility and renown, the respect it has attained as a key player in our speciality, and we think of our commitment to innovation in education.

During my term as President, the EAPCI has grown to become one of the largest associations within the umbrella of the European

Society of Cardiology (ESC). One of the reasons that the EAPCI has become such a strong key player in recent years is through the power of our members. We are strong because of the enormous increase in membership over these last three years, doubling from 3,000 in 2010 to almost 6,000 today.

One of the other keys to our success is the strength of our very active executive Board, all of whom are totally dedicated to the work of the EAPCI, and I would like to thank them all for their work. Our various committees, active and committed to their specific missions, have been instrumental in increasing the reputation of our association, and we owe a special thanks to the different chairs, co-chairs and their teams who give so much of themselves to our profession.

It is here, in our association's ongoing commitment to all aspects of interventional cardiology that the EAPCI excels. The very structure of our association encourages this active commitment and dedication to serious innovation, and I am especially pleased by the continued evolution of our committees and the work of the new committees created during my presidency. The first of these very active "new" committees is called the "New initiatives for young interventionalists". Led by Gregory Ducrocq, Davide Capodanno and their team, this committee has truly followed the word "initiatives" in its name, working closely with us on such innovative programmes as last year's EAPCI summit and this year's creation of the upcoming Fellow's Course at the European Heart House in July. They have also been instrumental in focusing the different tracks of the EuroPCR programme into one specially dedicated to young interventionalists during the Course. The "Young" committee is also behind the innovative "CathGo", matching fellows with available interventional and research opportunities throughout Europe and the world.

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Our special committee dedicated to Women, addressing issues of gender for both the practising and future female interventionalists, or the female patient, was recently formed and is being led by Julinda Mehilli as chair along with her co-chair Josepa Mauri. Already very implicated in the preparation of EuroPCR, they are committed to taking a serious look at the question of gender difference in access to patient care in ACS and STEMI, as well as providing a platform for female interventionalists, encouraging an increase in their number and providing them with the information necessary to advance in their work.

The last committee founded under my presidency, and which has hit the ground running with an amazing track for nurses and technicians within the EuroPCR programme, is under the able direction of Lene Kløvgaard, Sandra Griggio and David Zughaft. It goes without saying that nurses and technicians are key to our practice, and it is only natural that they have their centre within the professional association of our profession, providing them with information, education and contacts.

As an association, the EAPCI has become strong in the way we work together, and today we are also strong financially, thanks to the careful and disciplined way we have shepherded our resources. For this, I would like to thank our treasurer, Marie-Claude Morice, because it was under her watchful gaze that we now have a budget surplus, far more in our treasury than we had three years ago. The strength of our treasury will offer our association's new Board more possibilities in their commitment to innovation with the development of new concepts, activities and initiatives.

## Reaching out through Education and Courses

In all our work, the EAPCI finds its strength – and has built its reputation – in our overriding commitment to innovation in education and communication.

During the last three years, we have participated actively in the preparation and elaboration of the programme of our EAPCI official courses: EuroPCR, the PCR London Valves and the new RHC course in Berlin. EuroPCR, under the direction and vision of Jean Marco, and now William Wijns with whom I have the great honour to share the leadership, continues to innovate and evolve, welcoming more than 12,000 participants each year for a Course that challenges and inspires our specialty, continuing to embody the PCR spirit of “By and For”. This year we will have four dedicated tracks – coronary, structural heart, peripheral and hypertension – as well as special focuses for women, nurses and technicians and young interventionalists as mentioned above. We also want to give a very special thanks to Florence and Marc Doncieux, along with the whole Europa Organisation team who work hard all year round to make EuroPCR and the PCR Family a reality, and who have personally contributed to this incredible success story for the last 25 years.

PCR London Valves, our dedicated annual meeting for percutaneous valve interventions under the able direction and vision of Martyn Thomas, Stephan Windecker and their co-directors has kept us abreast of the latest developments in TAVI, emerging procedures in mitral repair and other structural heart challenges.

The Resistant Hypertension Course, in collaboration with the European Society of Hypertension is a challenging new meeting enlivening the dialogue and exploring emerging options in the treatment of resistant hypertension. This last course, like all our official courses, is fully dedicated to ensuring an excellent analysis of the latest trials, examining innovations in clinical practice and new devices and techniques. Coming together and sharing experience at the RHC and on its website gives us a profound understanding of the scope and identification of the right patient who can best benefit from these new treatments. Many thanks to Felix Mahfoud and Konstantinos Tsioufis, co-directors of this meeting, and to Atul Pathak for his dynamism and active contribution in what has quickly become an important resource for our profession.

As always, these last years have been marked by the innovative spirit – and active presence – of Jean Marco. Most recently his philosophy of education has played a key role in the creation of the very successful EAPCI endorsed PCR Seminars programmes held throughout Europe and internationally, created “By and For” the participating interventionalists. Over the last three years we have seen 1,180 specialists from 23 countries participating in more than 57 seminars, and we are sure this will continue – and grow – in the future.

## Publications and education

Over the last three years, I have had the honour of being part of the fantastic and ongoing success of the EAPCI's scientific publications. Launched just two years ago, the impressive PCR-EAPCI Percutaneous Interventional Cardiovascular Medicine Textbook has quickly assumed the role of the key reference and source for interventional cardiology worldwide. This enormous task – which is constantly updated – would not be possible without the ongoing great efforts of all the many people who participated in its elaboration. We cannot acknowledge enough the excellent work of the textbook editors, Eric Eeckhout, Patrick W. Serruys, William Wijns, Alec Vahanian, Mark Van Sambeek and Rodney De Palma.

It was the success of our publications that played a role in the positive influence the EAPCI has had on the ESC educational platform as it developed during my presidency. We were the first association to complete our contribution with chapters, clinical cases and MCQs. This was a direct result of the incredible work accomplished, in advance, by the PCR-EAPCI textbook, which became an integral part of this ESC learning platform. We thank Lino Gonçalves, Martine Gilard and the entire educational committee of the EAPCI for their incredible work in education and outreach for our association.

Our journal, EuroIntervention, is a constant source of excellent information and we are very proud to have such a prestigious publication linked to our association. Under the inspired direction of Patrick W. Serruys, Editor in Chief, and seconded by Managing Editor Paul Cummins, EuroIntervention has fast become the “go-to” journal in our field, as is evidenced by the fantastic impact factor for such a speciality journal of 3.2. The journal has added to its reputation by its invigorating dedicated website and the excellent series of

topic-dedicated supplements it publishes, furthering our knowledge on specific issues such as Bifurcations, Valves or BVS, to name but a few. EuroIntervention has also become an increasing source for position papers, with one soon to be published on cardiac arrest.

Over the last three years, the EAPCI has been involved in a diverse group of activities promoting the exchange of information and knowledge. We have also long participated in the elaboration of guidelines, such as the revascularisation guidelines, an update of which we will be presenting during EuroPCR. The EAPCI is also at the cutting edge of the use of evolving technologies for the transference of information and clinical knowledge, with the different iPad applications that are of increasing use as reference to the specialist such as our OCT and Valve atlas. Again, it is the people behind the scenes who make this happen, and our thanks go to the hard-working team at Europa Digital & Publishing under the able direction of Frédéric Doncieux who make our publications and websites possible.

## STENT for LIFE

An incredible and special achievement during these last three years is to have had the great honour of being able to see the expansion and growing interest – and most importantly the clinical success – of the Stent for Life Initiative. This has continued to expand across different European countries as well as abroad to improve patient access to primary PCI for STEMI patients and the percutaneous active management of NSTEMI and ACS. For this ongoing success many should be thanked, but first we begin with the pioneers of this noble project, William Wijns, Petr Widimsky and Steen Dalby Kristensen. I have had the great pleasure of meeting and working with exceptional individuals and cardiologists in this project, Carlo Di Mario and now Petr Kala who is leading Stent for Life, and special thanks must go to the tireless Zuzana Kaifoszova who has accompanied the project since its inception.

## The ESC

Finally, we cannot speak about our association without speaking about its parent organisation, the greatest cardiology organisation in the world, the ESC. When I began my presidency, I felt that one of my first goals was to improve the relationship between the EAPCI

and the ESC, as well as our relationship with the other associations within the ESC. Today, as I hand over the presidency, I can say that that goal has been achieved. Not only has the relationship between the ESC and EAPCI improved, but we have increased our activities within the ESC – and especially our visibility – through the magnificent work of the entire EAPCI Scientific Programme Committee. This committee, led by Marco Roffi and Giulio Guagliumi, has worked diligently in designing the popular interventional cardiology programme during the ESC's annual meeting, which today provides the latest information on our speciality as well as increasing the visibility of our association.

I would also like to thank Marielle de la Torre for her great work and close collaboration with the entire executive Board as well as Sophie Squarta, who have helped make these relationships so positive.

Finally, I have had the wonderful opportunity to work closely with the Past President of the ESC, Michel Komajda, greatly appreciating the foresight of his analysis, the clarity of his judgement and the precisions of his interventions within the ESC Board. In the same fashion, I have collaborated with the current President Panos Vardas and the President-Elect Fausto Pinto, all exceptional individuals who, with their different approaches and personalities, have helped forge the ESC that we know today, creatively committed to improving cardiology care for all.

## A world of innovation in ongoing education and communication

Soon the future will be upon us. The new Board and executives will have been elected, and their objectives, like those of my successor following this article, Stephan Windecker, will have been enumerated, but as my term comes to a close I am pleased with what we have accomplished - in membership, in evolution, in education.

Now, as I end my almost three years as President, I see that together we have further solidified the strong foundations that were built by my predecessors, and I cannot thank enough all of my many collaborators and the members of our association whom I have met as President of the EAPCI who have made all this possible. To end, as sailing is my favourite hobby, I would like to wish Stephan Windecker and the new EAPCI Board "*Bon vent*"...

## A statement from the President-Elect

Stephan Windecker, MD, PhD; *President-Elect of the EAPCI 2014-2016*

It will now be my privilege to lead the EAPCI, and over the next months I will be writing to you regularly in this column. I would like to thank Jean Fajadet for his commitment and tireless work for our association, and I know I can count on his support as Past President within the newly elected EAPCI Board. There will also be great continuity at EuroIntervention, with Patrick Serruys as Editor-in-Chief and ex officio member of the Board.

During my term in office, which will run until 2016, I will focus on such objectives as strengthening the scientific visibility of EAPCI, making valvular heart disease interventions a key priority of the association, raising the educational standards in interventional cardiovascular medicine, addressing gender differences in access, care and outcome, and focusing on the young interventional cardiovascular community.

### Focusing on the young interventional cardiovascular community

Investment in the upcoming and future interventional cardiovascular community will be a top priority to attract the most talented individuals into our subspecialty. The “Young” Committee will continue to develop specific initiatives adapted to the needs of young interventional cardiologists in training.

### Addressing gender differences in access, care and outcome

Inequalities in access to care - particularly among female patients with ACS - have been acknowledged. At the same time, we know that minimally invasive treatments such as transcatheter heart valve interventions are especially beneficial for elderly female patients. The dedicated EAPCI Women Committee will address these issues.

### Raising educational standards in interventional cardiovascular medicine

The prolific development in several domains including coronary interventions, transcatheter heart valve interventions, structural heart disease interventions, neurohumoral denervation and interventional pharmacology poses an increasing responsibility to

provide a common ground of knowledge and expertise. The EAPCI will further raise educational standards by:

- Continued development of the ESC eLearning platform
- Establishment of a regular European interventional cardiovascular Fellows’ Course
- Provision of training grants for young interventional cardiology fellows
- Involvement of nurses and technicians in the training process

### Making valvular heart disease interventions a key priority of the EAPCI

The advent of transcatheter heart valve interventions is one of the most important recent advances in our field and in cardiology as a whole. The association will continue to advance this subspecialty in numerous ways, by:

- Participating in educational platforms such as PCR London Valves
- Cooperating with other associations such as EHRA, EACVI, HFA and the Working Group on Valvular Heart Disease to provide the highest standard of care to affected patients
- Facilitating adoption of this new technology across Europe

### Strengthening the scientific visibility of EAPCI

Interventional cardiovascular medicine is one the most vibrant and innovative disciplines within cardiology, contributing immensely to improving patient outcome. We will build on previous efforts to advance scientific knowledge and standards further in several ways, by:

- Facilitating scientific consensus and position documents on relevant topics of interventional cardiovascular medicine
- Assisting in obtaining European research funding support
- Providing a networking platform for clinical research partnership

All of these goals are in keeping with those established over the last few years, and involve the active participation of our members and dedicated committees. Together, we can continue to witness the positive evolution of the EAPCI and our speciality. I look forward to the challenges of the years ahead.