

President's Report
Presented at the General Assembly of the EAPC
23 September 1999, Geneva, Switzerland

There has been a great deal of activity and many developments in the EAPC in the 4 years since my last report and these have been reported regularly in the EAPC Newsletter. I shall therefore focus, in this report, on a few important highlights.

Membership

The EAPC was founded in December 1988 with 42 individual members from 9 different European countries. The Association now represents over 25,000 individuals and the vast majority of these are members through their membership of Collective Member Associations of the EAPC. Thus the Association has become a federation of palliative care national societies and is still growing rapidly with numerous organisations currently in negotiation for collective membership. The EAPC has become a very significant body and one of the largest healthcare associations in the world.

Changes to the By-laws

The Head Office of the EAPC is based in Milan, Italy and in 1998 the law in Italy relating to charitable foundations was revised. This necessitated changes to the By-laws of the EAPC in order to retain its charitable status. If this status had been lost the EAPC would not have been able to survive because of its limited income. The changes to the By-laws were accomplished by the Executive Committee with great assistance from our auditor Silvio Necchi. The details of the changes have been reported elsewhere but I comment on them here because the new By-laws provide a much firmer financial basis for the Association as it faces the new millennium and will ensure a sound foundation for future developments. It is appropriate again to record our thanks to Silvio Necchi and to Giacomo Milioti who provided legal advice and assistance. Both devoted substantial amounts of time to facilitate the revision of the By-laws. At an extraordinary General Assembly held in Milan in December 1998, Silvio Necchi and Giacomo Milioti were elected honorary members of the EAPC in recognition of this contribution.

Retirements from the Board

Four long-standing members of the Board retire at this General Assembly.

Jordi Roca i Casas has been a Member of the Board for almost 10 years and is a Vice-President of the EAPC. He was Chairman of the Organisation Committee for the 4th EAPC Congress in Barcelona and will continue to be involved as a member of the newly established Policy Network Steering Committee.

René Schaerer was a founding Board Member and has been Treasurer of the EAPC since its beginning. His wise counsel and careful husbandry of the accounts in collaboration with Heidi Blumhuber has enabled the EAPC to grow and develop enormously with minimal funds.

Frances Sheldon was a founding Board Member and has thus served the EAPC in this way for 11 years. She was also Chair of the Scientific Committee for the 5th EAPC Congress in London.

Bernadette Wouters is a founding Board Member and a Vice-President of the EAPC. In addition to her long-standing contribution to the activities of the Board she was joint-Chair of the Organisation Committee for the 2nd EAPC Congress in Bruxelles. Bernadette continues as joint-Chair of the Education Network.

These four individuals have given outstanding service to the European Association over a very long period of time. We give them our thanks and wish them well in their future endeavours.

Head Office Staff

The Head Office of the EAPC has been based in the National Cancer Institute in Milan since 1988. Again I should like to record on behalf of the EAPC our thanks to the Director of the Division of Pain, Palliative Care and Rehabilitation at the National Cancer Institute, Dr Franco de Conno (also an Executive Officer of the EAPC) for continuing to subsidise the EAPC by providing office accommodation and expenses. The Head Office staff led by Heidi Blumhuber, Executive Officer, are Yvonne El Masri, Amelia Giordano and Guillermo Vanegas. They continue to provide a tightly run and efficient office for the Association and all give much time and energy to their work for the Association.

Website

One of the most important developments for the EAPC in the last 12 months has been the creation of a website (www.eapcare.org). This is described more fully elsewhere by our webmasters, Carlo Peruselli and Heidi Blumhuber, working in conjunction with Axel Vanderperre of Medli International. The website will be a vital means of communication in the future as the EAPC continues to grow in numbers and geographically. May I urge everyone to take a few moments to visit the website now and to give feedback to the webmasters so that it can quickly develop and expand. This will be of mutual benefit to all of our members.

European Journal of Palliative Care

The editor-in-chief of the Journal reports separately elsewhere. The European Journal has been an undoubted success and is beginning now to contribute significant amounts to the finances of the Association. However, its potential is far from being fulfilled and the Board has agreed to institute some changes which will mean that in future we will be working much more closely with the editors of the Journal to ensure that it is in touch with all of the activities and developments in the Association. In future the Journal editors, both English and French, will attend Board meetings and we look forward to much closer collaboration. We are grateful to the publishers, Hayward Medical, for agreeing to pay the costs for both Editors. Again, I would urge members to look at the Journal and if they have not already done so to take out a subscription.

Future Congresses and Appointment of Core Professional Congress Organiser

The biennial EAPC Congress has from the beginning of the Association been a major event in the calendar. The Congresses have grown over the years and are now very major enterprises requiring a huge commitment of time and energy from the organisers. The Congresses are also potentially an important source of income to the EAPC and the Board has decided that the EAPC should appoint a core professional congress organiser who will be responsible for the organisation of all future biennial congresses of the EAPC. An initial agreement has been completed with K&K Congress based in Tel Aviv and Geneva who will be the conference organisers for the next Congress to be held in Palermo, Italy in April 2001.

The Future

One of the most significant developments in the history of the EAPC was the decision to allow national associations to join as so-called "collective members". It has become clear that this has been a major source of growth and strength to the EAPC and the Association is now largely made up of "Collective Member Associations". This is undoubtedly the future for the

EAPC with another 9 associations currently in negotiation for “Collective Membership”. It is vital that these associations, big and small, play an active role in the activities of the EAPC itself and the Board of the EAPC will continue to give great emphasis and encouragement to developing links with its Collective Members.

The other strategic decision which is already bearing fruit was the decision to set up networks to focus on education, ethics and research, and now policy and public health. As is evident from the reports of the Chairs of the network steering committees, they have stimulated much activity and productivity and this also is vital for the future of the EAPC.

So, I am happy to report that the EAPC is healthy and growing and vigorous and powerful. May I give my personal thanks to all those who have supported me during my period of office and in particular to my secretary and personal assistant, Deborah Ashby, who has run and continues to run the President’s office (now the past-President’s office). My best wishes to Professor Stein Kaasa as he leads the EAPC into the new millennium.