

President's Page

A Greek at the Head of the European Society of Cardiology

VLASSIS N. PYRGAKIS

Department of Cardiology, "G. Gennimatas" Hospital, Athens, Greece



Dear Colleagues,
We live in an era that is especially difficult for Greece. The political, social, and economic life of the country are being "paced" by consequences of the international financial crisis, at the epicentre of which Greece has the misfortune to find itself. Uncertainty about the future of the region has led Greeks to a generalised state of reserve, or even melancholy. There are few causes for optimism. National pride is a rare commodity.

However, for Greek cardiologists, and for the country's medical community as a whole, an opportunity has arisen. It gives me great pleasure to announce the good news: that Professor Panos Vardas has been elected to the post of President of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) for the period 2012-2014. For those familiar with the devious workings of the international cardiological milieu it seems unbelievable ...

A Greek at the head of the European Society of Cardiology!!!

The ESC is the largest scientific association in Europe, viz.:

- Members of 52 national cardiological societies from Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, and countries like the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Georgia, etc., represent more than 59,000 cardiologists.
- The European Cardiology Congress, which is organised by the ESC at the end of August each year, is considered to be the biggest medical congress in the world.
- The seven journals published by the ESC are included among the world's top scientific journals.

- The stated mission of the ESC, "to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in Europe", and its efforts at the European level to pursue that goal, enjoy the full support of the European Commission.

The election of Professor Vardas was officially announced on June 28, 2010, and was achieved with a large majority (72%) over a very prominent and talented Spanish colleague, making the victory even more significant.

The honour first and foremost belongs to the victor, who expended endless hours and travelled thousands of kilometres to lay the foundations of success. However, the laborious pre-election campaign was not the only thing. The electoral body's voting support was also a tribute to Panos Vardas' entire scientific career in the field of cardiology, which notably includes, among other things, his efforts in taking an almost non-existent cardiology department at the end of the 1980s and raising it from a small, peripheral Greek university department in Crete (as it was then) to a centre that is known worldwide for its high clinical, educational, and scientific standards. Professor Vardas was also rewarded for his dedication and his organisational and other abilities, which he brought to bear in all the positions of responsibility he has occupied in previous years: Director of Cardiology Department, Heraklion University Hospital; Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Crete; President of the Hellenic Cardiological Society; ESC Board Member; President of the European Heart Rhythm Association; Chairman of the ESC Guidelines Task Force, etc.

Professor Vardas' success in being elected to the most important position in the international cardiology world is also a credit to all those Greek cardiologists, members of the Hellenic Cardiological Society,

who publicised his candidacy as a “national cardiological issue”.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the HCS Board, to thank all those who contributed, wherever and however, to the successful outcome of the contest on the part of our “national” candidate. I am sure that Panos Vardas, with the great abilities he has already been proved to possess, will fully live up to the increased responsibilities of this new post and will work to advance all matters of interest in European cardiology. He will also provide a boost to the important work being carried out by cardiologists in countries smaller than the “great powers” that, until now, have monopolised scientific knowledge and research.

Keeping in mind that “fame is the perfume of our acts of virtue” (Sappho), I believe unshakeably that Panos Vardas, during his Presidency of the ESC, will bring honour, not only to himself and his family, but also to his colleagues.

Panos

*“... now your fame begins
Songs of your country will tell
Of the triumphs that made her Son deserve ...”*

(Byron)

Good luck. Make us proud.