

Editor's Page

The European Society of Cardiology: Priorities, Projects, Plans

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The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) was founded in 1948 through the initiative of a number of national cardiology societies. This federal organisation, like all scientific non-profit societies, is based on volunteerism and a general spirit of camaraderie, creativity, participation, and scientific progress. Today, the same spirit continues to stimulate and inspire the thousands of volunteers who so effectively support the ESC. This spirit, which was the seed from which the huge tree of our Society grew, took its form from the Society's mission and doctrine, which could be summarised as follows:

- To reduce the burden of cardiovascular diseases.
- To identify and alleviate health care inequalities in different regions.
- To promote humanitarianism globally, and especially in vulnerable population groups.

For this spirit and doctrine to be productive, a strategy and a set of objectives are needed. The ESC, especially during the last 32 years – in the new era, the era of Paul Hugenholz – has demonstrated a high-level strategy that continues to develop with continuity and wisdom.

Table 1. Successful projects.

Conferences & Educational Courses
Journals & Publications
Guidelines & Consensus Papers
EORP (EURObservational Research Programme)
European Union Affairs
Cardiovascular Round Table

This strategy includes the following central elements:

- Unity, as ensured by the unimpeded collaboration of the ESC Central Organisation with the National Societies, the Associations, the Working Groups & Councils.
- Transparency in the running of the society, a hierarchy of strategic priorities, and financial management.
- Innovative ideas and global understanding, since needs and demands are increasing exponentially, even more so in the area where our Society is active.
- Adaptation to constantly changing conditions. In order to survive, every organism needs to show the ability to adapt, and this applies particularly to large bodies and organisations.

For this strategy to be applied, well designed and effective policies must be implemented. Our central policy could be summarised as follows:

1. Maintenance of success (Table 1).
2. Organisation of new projects (Table 2).
3. Respect for the new regulatory environment.

Table 2. New & evolving projects.

Global Scientific Activities
New Educational Products
Brussels Project
ESC Schools / Academy
New Journals, New Associations
ESC in the Electronic Era

The application of this policy requires business acumen, high morale among the ranks of our Heart House employees, and excellent communication and coordination between our volunteers and our employees. Fortunately, these are all things that the ESC has in good measure.

The needs and the criteria for the correct management of our grand and historic Society are well known to me. The various circumstances that can affect our progress – financial considerations, regulatory environment, health care system changes – are also well

known, and unfortunately they are extremely difficult and complex. Thus, we face the great challenge: how to apply our strategic and tactical planning successfully.

If we are to pursue this noble mission, it will take courage, tenacity, and support from all ESC Members and Fellows, from all National Societies, and from all cardiologists working in health care systems throughout Europe.

Can we do this? I believe that, with your continuing support, we can and will succeed.