

Dear Friends,

As 2008 draws to an end it gives us the opportunity to reflect on issues that are important to both our society and also our specialty. We would like to take the opportunity that this holiday season presents to update our membership on a number of important issues that the Executive Committee and Council are currently acting upon.

After many years we have had to say goodbye to our previous Executive Officer, Suzanne Smitz de Smet. Suzanne has been with us for many years and witnessed the development of our society from its early beginnings through to the major international player that it is today. In September, we have been very pleased to welcome Nelly Le Dévic as Suzanne's replacement, starting a new era in the management of this Society. Nelly joins the Brussels office as the new EO and will undoubtedly bring to us her skills and talents derived from her previous legal work within the European Commission.

<http://www.esicm.org/Data/ModuleGestionDeContenu/PagesGenerees/01-about/0A-whoweare/12.asp>

2008 has certainly been an interesting year in terms of economic and fiscal issues. Despite the challenging circumstances, our society remains financially stable and viable. In deed the last few years have been extremely successful for our society and the astute financial management of our current and previous treasurer has put us into an enviable position. The Executive Committee and Council are now reviewing mechanisms of returning this investment back to our members and wisely invested their money. In line with our statutes and 'mission statement' this will be done with a view of improving research, education and professional development.

Research remains one of the main areas of interest for ESICM. Over the last few years we have developed a number of research awards for individuals that amounts to considerable sums of money. These awards enable researchers to continue their projects and further the science behind our specialty. In 2009, as in recent years, there will be a number of these awards available to our members. The application process for applying for these awards is now open and can be viewed on our website.

<http://www.esicm.org/Data/ModuleGestionDeContenu/PagesGenerees/05-research/0B-eccrn/awards/99.asp>

Apart from these awards, ESICM has now decided to also support interventional research projects. In Lisbon we announced the first of these major research studies that would be supported- the EUROTHERM study with Peter Andrews as PI. This study will be actively looking for patients with traumatic head injury and will need sites to participate in the project. This will be the first of hopefully many research studies that will originate from the ESICM trials group that is being developed by Daniel De Backer.

<http://www.eurotherm3235trial.eu/>

The PACT project is now finished. Although this ambitious exercise has taken us a little longer than originally envisaged, it has been truly worthwhile and now provides us with an exceptional educational tool. We are currently in the process of bringing together a new editorial team that will be tasked with keeping the modules up-to-date and transforming PACT from a paper based format to a web-based tool.

We are currently evaluating different proposals that have been suggested by our members as to how the investment that the society has made in this project can now be returned to the membership in order to facilitate their educational and professional development needs.

If you are interested in the PACT programme then renew your membership in 2009 and you will get PACT! The Executive Committee of the Society recently took the decision to make PACT as a membership benefit as of 2009. Now in addition to the Intensive Care Medicine Journal, reduced prices for various Society activities, the ESICM books and many other benefits you will have free access to the 2nd web-based edition of PACT

<http://www.esicm.org/Data/ModuleGestionDeContenu/PagesGenerees/03-education/OB-pact-programme/25.asp>

The ability of any society to be able to influence politicians and governments in order to further our aims, does to a certain extent rely on our membership numbers. We are actively trying to expand our membership so that we can truly become the largest and most representative society of intensive care medicine throughout the world. To this end we can now announce a discounted membership rate and package for individuals who would like to join our society from certain parts of the world. Other different campaigns will follow.

<http://www.esicm.org/Data/ModuleGestionDeContenu/PagesGenerees/02-membership/0A-ourmembers/benefits/21.asp>

We hope that this expanded membership base will enable us to influence the practice of our specialty within Europe and also for further afield.

2008 has certainly been a busy and active year for our society. We hope that 2009 will be equally successful. We would like to thank all of our members for their continued support and would like to wish you all a happy and prosperous year ahead.

Our best wishes for a happy new 2009.  
Rui Moreno, President ESICM  
Andy Rhodes, President-Elect ESICM  
Nelly Le Devic, Executive Officer ESICM