

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ANNUAL MEETING 2020

September 8, 2020

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Antonis Kalemis

Dear friends and colleagues,

We are still living under extraordinary pandemic conditions, but I hope nonetheless that you are facing the challenge with courage and optimism.

Why are we meeting today? Because our legal obligations as an association require us to maintain the mandatory points on the agenda. These include the 2019 annual accounts and the 2020 budget, as well as the validation of our newcomers.

It is also, of course, an opportunity to discuss any other subject related to NMEU activities that you would like to bring to our attention.

Another virtual meeting will be organized in October. That is when we will present updates on our management plan, the activities of the working groups, as well as our relations with the European institutions and the presentations of the members who joined the association in 2020. We will shortly send you an invitation to this meeting with the date and a detailed agenda.

I will, therefore, be brief in my President's report.

We all know what a strange turn this year has taken. However, although we have been deprived of many of the freedoms we take for granted, we have also taken stock. We have looked not only at the period since January 2019, but we also have assessed with hindsight the road travelled since the birth of our association 30 years ago.

We currently have 45 member companies and associate partners. In the past 10 years, we have tripled the number of adherents, and this means many more people now take part in our working groups.

Today, the field of nuclear medicine is more innovative and exciting than ever. We have camera manufacturers introducing more powerful and more sophisticated systems, we have radiopharmaceutical companies introducing smart new diagnostic tracers, and we have artificial intelligence entering into the field.

We also see brilliant new cancer therapy concepts coming into play, promising life-saving treatments for patients.

Make no mistake, our sector is growing. Nuclear medicine's state-of-the-art solutions are now part of the arsenal for health providers use to fight cancer, heart diseases and neurological complications.

However, as interest in nuclear medicine rises it also means that we need to be stronger together to defend our activities. That is why we are so grateful for your confidence in NMEU to represent our sector.

I cannot talk about 2019 without mentioning the change of our association's name. Our new name, Nuclear Medicine Europe, is a clear identity and a bold statement of what we represent as an industry association. Our visibility has improved and we have almost forgotten our previous identity as an "association of imaging producers and equipment suppliers". I thank you all for supporting us in this evolutionary effort.

2019 also marked an important step forward in our relations with the European Parliament. The Parliament's committee dealing with health issues, the ENVI Committee, has assured us of its support in our future projects and actions. And we are already included in the working groups of the "Europe's beating Cancer Plan" programme launched in February by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

In less than a decade, our Annual Symposium has grown from a small event with some 30 members and friends in a hotel room to a packed auditorium in the European Parliament.

We are very proud of last year's Symposium, in the European Parliament. It included contributions from distinguished experts in the field, and a commitment from influential Italian MEP Aldo Patriciello to push for more investment in cancer research. It also resulted in a procedure to apply for a 'European Day of Nuclear Medicine'.

The support of the European institutions is essential for securing our presence both on the European market and globally. This is where our work helps you.

We also had a chance to reflect on our journey as an association's at our 30th anniversary celebration, in Barcelona last October, a gathering that brought together all of you, pioneers and newcomers. It was a wonderful moment to both look back at what we had achieved and look forward to new horizons.

So, what about the future? There are many unknowns ahead of us. It is hard to predict the duration of the pandemic, what the new "normal" will look like, and how we should position ourselves. But we do know that it is crucial to continue with our mission.

We are working on some new graphic tools to apply remotely at the EANM Congress, which we will present to you at our next video meeting. We are also thinking about a series of communications over different channels to showcase what the association and nuclear medicine does in these times of the pandemic. This is essential so that people do not forget topics like cancer at times when the focus shifts to the latest different issues, as we have seen with COVID-19.

Our Achilles' heel is that our resources are limited and we still have to depend on our own resources. But as you know, we always wanted to keep our autonomy vis-à-vis big pharma associations and major consultancy groups. Our central office is still run by one person, Jocelyne, with the partial support of our graphic designer David.

Nonetheless, we are keeping our heads above water – in part due to the availability and commitment of the working groups and my colleagues on the Executive Committee. But we will have to do more, and do so more consistently and better. We may have to consider hiring a Director General.

Dear friends and colleagues, I would like to thank you once more for your trust. And I will not end without mentioning the people who are working in the shadows to help us accomplish the mandate until 2022. They are Ms Vedeyen, our valued accountant; Isabelle Van Schendel, our lawyer who guides us through the sometimes complex procedures; David Crunelle, who creates such beautiful imagery; and of course, Jocelyne Baldasso, for her endless energy and enthusiasm.

I wish the very best to you all!

Antonis