

Editorial



Medard Lech, Secretary General

Dear Friends,

We are now approaching 2015 and this will be the 27th year of ESC activities. Our Society has its own history. Some of us still remember the day of 26th December 1988 when the ESC was founded. During the last 26 years we have achieved a lot. I can say, without hesitation, that during this time our Society has become one of the major players in the field of contraception and reproductive health.

During the very successful 13th ESC Congress (Lisbon, May 2014) we have elected a new President, a new Editor-in-Chief of the European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care, and many new members of the ESC Executive Committee, Internal Scientific Committee, ESC Board of Directors and Expert Groups. Let me congratulate all these people for their nominations as well as passing to them best wishes for their work and successes in the year 2015. At the same time, let me also invite you all to the 12th ESC Seminar in Tel-Aviv. Remember the date: 2nd – 4th September 2015!

And last but not least, I wish a happy and very successful 2015 year for all ESC members, their families and friends.

Best greetings
Medard

Membership 2015



Membership 2015

As the end of the year is approaching fast, we will soon start our ESC membership 2015 campaign. However, there is no need to wait to renew your membership or to become a new member through the following link: www.escrih.eu/user/register

We are delighted to announce that the Journal (European Journal of Contraception and Reproductive Health Care) is again included in the membership fee (60 euro) without any additional cost.

We have listed here a few of the benefits you enjoy as a member:

- 6 free editions of the official ESC Journal,
- 3 newsletters,
- Members may apply to stand for the Board or Expert Groups,
- Members may apply to the ESC for educational grants,
- Members get free attendance at Seminars and a substantial reduction to the Congress fee,
- Personal access to the ESC website

International or national European organisations with similar or related aims may apply for affiliation to the ESC. Members of affiliated societies pay a 50 percent reduced yearly fee. Members of affiliated societies have the same rights as other ESC members including voting rights.

Abortion law



Abortion law controversy in Spain

Opinion polls have forced the Rajoy Government to withdraw the proposed amendment to the abortion law which would have ended freedom of abortion in Spain, replacing abortion on request, with a new regulation returning to the past of more than 30 years ago. Social mobilization, the support of the majority of the health care professionals in Spain, the support of international organisations, and the discomfort of the majority of the voters of the Popular Party, have managed to keep “free choice”. It is a triumph for freedom, although it continues to be a great pity that women’s rights depend on political elections. However the risk persists because the Constitutional High Court, whose subjection to the current Government is well known, have still to give a final verdict. Therefore, the pressure of public opinion must be maintained.

Roberto Lertxundi, Board member Spain

14th Congress / 2nd
Global Conference
of the ESC



14th Congress - 2nd Global Conference of the ESC

Contraception from molecular biology to social science and politics
Basel, Switzerland: 4 - 7 May 2016

It is with great pleasure that we announce that the 14th Congress and 2nd Global Conference of the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health will take place in Basel from 4 to 7 May 2016.

An International Advisory Board, representing professional organisations as well as individual opinion leaders will, together with the ESC Scientific and Organising Committees, ensure a high educational and scientific level. The programme outline has been established and co-ordinators appointed to work out the content of the sessions in detail. We will publish the programme on our website in the near future.

Abstract submission deadline: 15 November 2015

We invite all those involved in any aspect of contraception, sexual and reproductive health care to actively participate by submitting abstracts, either for oral or poster presentation.

Abstract submission instructions: www.esrh.eu/events/esc-events/2016/abstract

Save the date of this event and hope to see you in Basel.

Best wishes,

Johannes Bitzer
Congress President

Interview



David Serfaty

Interview with David Serfaty (France)

Q1. You are a co-founder of the ESC and the first President of the Society. What were the most important aims and working plans of the Society of that time? Does the ESC fulfil your plans?

I founded the European Society of Contraception (ESC) together with the help of G. Creatas (Gr), A. Almeida Santos (Portugal), M. Short (Ir.), SO Skouby (DK), A. Teischmann (Germany) and M. Vekemans (Belgium) during my service at the hospital Saint-Louis, Paris, France on December 26, 1988. Our aim was to promote the harmonisation of different policies concerning contraception in the countries of Europe. Such a structure did not exist in 1988 although contraception was available since the 1960s. ESC intended to :

- 1/ improve and facilitate the knowledge and use of contraception in the European Union
- 2/ to rationalise the different policies on contraception in the EU countries
- 3/ to promote availability of all contraceptive methods in the EU countries

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Did the ESC meet these goals? My answer would be: YES in general. The organisation of 13 congresses, 11 seminars, the journal, the newsletter and the website all contribute to this goal. Also the 1147 members from 31 countries contribute each day to meet these aims by sharing knowledge and experience. And we must not forget the role of the Board members who promote contraception in their own countries. This being said, we still have a major task ahead of us in all countries of Europe.

Q2. Now, in 2014, the ESC is a well established society. The number of the ESC members is continually increasing and we have very well attended congresses. What would be your advice for the newly elected ESC Board of Directors and what kind of new activities would you like to see for the Society?

I would advise the Board members to actively inform their colleagues in their countries on what the ESC has to offer, including its activities. This is however a two-way street. The ESC should join forces and actively promote contraception in each of the 31 countries represented within the ESC. For example to gather all the achievements made over the years in the area of contraception in each country (national congresses, seminars, important events like the birth control crisis in France in 2013 and the consequences), legislation and to make this available in the newsletter or the website. We should also give Board members the opportunity to talk about these achievements during Board meetings.

Q3. There are some new ideas to increase the geographical scope of the ESC activity and to make ESC more international (to have more members from other continents, and to include on the Board of Directors representatives from non-European countries etc). What would be your opinion on this?

I'm not in favour of non-European countries having the same rules of representation on the Board. The ESC is a European organisation and if there were suddenly a majority of non-European board members, this would create an imbalance. We should, of course, welcome all non-European members, speakers and even advisers and experts. If this issue is raised, the ESC should reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of creating a non-European Board within the ESC and maybe have a non-European representation in the executive committee of the ESC as advisory member. In general, we should focus on improving the international visibility of the ESC. Why does ESC not contribute in FIGO? Why does it not contribute to the establishment of the WHO Medical Eligibility Criteria? Why does ESC not publish statements related to contraception?

The ESC still has a lot of potential to be fulfilled.

Dr. David SERFATY
Honorary President of ESC

**Sex education
in Serbia**



Provincial Secretary Marinika Tepić., President of Government of Province Vojvodina, Prof.dr Aleksandra Kapamadžija
First class of sexuality education, Sept '13



Book: Health education about reproductive health



Sex education in Serbia

During the 2013/2014 school year as a pilot project, in the province of Vojvodina in northern Serbia, sexual education has been organized in 10 high schools with second grade students (16 to 17 years old). The intention was to demonstrate the need to introduce sexual education in schools throughout Serbia (in high schools as well as in elementary schools). The school subject was named Health Education about Reproductive Health. The initiator was Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth, by the Provincial Secretary Marinika Tepić. The team wrote a book, created workshops and trained educators for this project and consists of Prof. Aleksandra Kapamadžija (MD, gynaecologist) heading the project, Prof Marija Zotović (psychologist), Assist. Prof.dr Snežana Ukropina (social medicine specialist), a urologist, an epidemiologist and two experts in youth work. Classes were organised as workshops where the educators were paired with students from final years of universities of medicine and psychology, trained and educated by the team.

The format has an holistic approach. The book was written according to WHO recommendations and contains all aspects of reproductive and sexual health for this age. References used for this purpose include literature recommended by ESC web library, and also from some Serbian authors – books on sexuality education in primary schools (Dr Katarina Sedlecky) on sexual function and disfunction, papers from authors of the book etc.

From the start Doctor Olga Loeber has been contacted and consulted while designing and conducting this education. Students were surveyed before and after the education and the results of the survey point to a significant improvement in knowledge, increased condom use and less aversion towards hormonal contraception as well as greater assertiveness in partnerships.

For the school year of 2014/2015, 66 high schools from Vojvodina have applied, educators are selected from Biology and PE teachers and school psychologists and pedagogists have been trained. A new edition of the book has been prepared, as well as a separate book for the educators, and at the beginning of 2014 a Dictionary of Reproductive Health was published. There is still no information from the Ministry of Education whether the issue of introducing this subject as mandatory in schools will be discussed.

**11th FIAPAC
Conference**



The 11th FIAPAC Conference - ESC Session

The International Federation of Professional Abortion and Contraception Associates (FIAPAC) held its 11th Conference in Ljubljana (Slovenia) on the 3rd and 4th October, 2014. The conference was entitled "Task sharing in abortion care", and included many topics which are relevant for the increase in availability and accessibility of safe abortion, as well as for the promotion of modern contraception use following abortion. Advocacy for women's rights on safe abortion, demography and abortion practice, legal regulation of abortion, the issue of conscientious objection, update on medical abortion, cultural and moral aspects of induced abortion and current controversies in contraception were some of the many interesting themes that were reviewed during the conference.

The session of the European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health (ESC), entitled "Unplanned pregnancy in adolescents" included four lectures. Katarina Sedlecky spoke about barriers in the access to contraception for minors, and Gabriele Merki-Feld about abortion in minors. Sam Rowlands gave an interesting talk on parental authorisation of abortion, and Teresa Bombas, in the lecture on improving uptake of effective contraception after abortion, presented current guidelines on medical eligibility for the use of various contraceptive methods in adolescents. The ESC session was attended by many colleagues from different countries, and lectures were well received.

Update Belgium



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Update Belgium

End of the distribution of birth control pills for family planning? "A flashback on the basis of an out-dated law!" The Walloon government wants to stop the distribution of birth control pills and morning-after pills in family planning. A royal decree of 1967 specifies that only pharmacists are allowed to do this. Family planning clinics would no longer be able to issue contraceptive pills and morning-after pills. Industry professionals are concerned that a lot of teenage girls and women in distress would avoid the obligatory stop at the chemist in favour of a wild abortion risk.

Internal Scientific Committee



György Bártfai, Hungary

Internal Scientific Committee

A new Internal Scientific Committee (ISC) was elected by the Board in May 2014: G. Bartfai (Hungary) - Chair, M. Kishen (UK), S. Ozalp (Turkey), B. Zilaitiene (Lithuania), G. Merki (Switzerland) - representing the Executive Committee

The duties and responsibilities of the ISC include:

- To identify candidates for the ESC medal
- To evaluate applications for projects and courses seeking ESC support
- Management of congress abstracts
- To review applications from other organisations requesting support ('auspices') from the ESC
- To review journal articles
- To advise on suitable lecturers to attend ESC sessions at other conferences

It was decided that besides the above mentioned five Board members, 3 or 4 non-Board members will be appointed as ISC members as well.

Expert Groups



Expert Groups

Expert groups consist of internationally recognised experts in different fields of contraception and reproductive health.

The composition of the ESC Expert Groups (EG) changed in May 2014. The new EG membership list is available at: www.esrh.eu/about-esc/committees/expert-groups/members

There are five Expert Groups:

- Expert Group on Sexual Medicine and Sex Education
- Expert Group on STI
- Expert Group on Abortion
- Expert Group on Future of Hormonal and Molecular Contraception
- Expert Group on Non-hormonal methods of contraception

The duties and responsibilities of the Expert Groups include:

- preparing an annual progress report
- organising a session at the ESC congress
- preparing statements, either spontaneously or at the request of the Board, when any new significant development occurs
- to help with congress, seminar or other ESC meetings. For example: chairing a session, marking abstracts or posters
- to review journal articles.