

Volume 15, Issue 3/2013 - Editorial

Facing Challenges Together

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Heinz Kölking

The year 2011 will surely stay in our memories for a long time due to the turbulent developments in the financial markets and national budgets. Under the widespread cost cutting measures in almost all European countries, hospitals have had to reduce spending or to find new sources of income. Company strategies had to bend and new priorities were set. During all of this, quality must increase or at least remain at current standards and come through this competition under the health suppliers.

These special challenges are faced by hospital managers across Europe and they will surely be with us for some years to come. Nobody wishes for such circumstances, but the situation is also a chance for the EAHM. Especially in troubled times, any good advice is worth its weight in gold. The topic of the planned 24th EAHM congress in Luxembourg (November 28-29, 2013) focuses on these challenges. Our scientific subcommittee has agreed that innovative hospital managers are needed more than ever as any profound change in the hospital is his executive duty. Budget deficits have of course to be avoided. However, it is also of primary importance to promote and to maintain cohesion and confidence during these cost cutting measures in the cooperation with all employees of the hospital.

Healthcare in our countries is a key factor for ensuring social cohesion and hospitals play a prominent role. On the one hand, the hospitals safeguard the medical and nursing care of the people in the member states. On the other hand, the hospitals represent an essential factor in our national economies. Many people are both directly and indirectly employed in the health economy. So all of us are asked to safeguard the prerequisites that this responsibility is taken in our countries in Europe. This is an acute challenge during times of financial crisis. Furthermore, the basic and various changes (technology; communication; demography; values) in our society have a profound effect on the structures and processes of the health supply. This multi-dimensional responsibility of the health sector for people and society will be the topic of the 25th EAHM congress in Berlin, which will take place on 11-12 September.

I must also take this time to sincerely thank our many dedicated members and partners within the EAHM. With the support and contributions of many of our colleagues in European hospitals we can overcome these challenges and look to the future. We owe this to the patients as well.

This issue of *(E)Hospital* provides many broader interesting topics for you which among others come from contributions of our colleagues in Austria and Northern Ireland. This issue the country focus deals with our friends in Bulgaria.

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President EAHM

Published on : Thu, 19 Sep 2013