Dear Reader,

2011 has already brought some exciting developments within the European Association of Healthcare IT Managers (HITM), which recently elected both Dr. Josep M. Picas i Vidal, CIO from the University Clinic Sant Pau in Barcelona, Spain as President and Mr. Miroslav Madjaric, CIO from the University Hospital Centre in Zagreb, Croatia as Vice President.

Furthermore, we are pleased to welcome new Editorial Board Members, elected for the 2011 – 2015 term, namely Jacob Hofdijk, Vice President EFMI-IMIA, Dr. Andrea Kdolski, former Minister of Health of Austria and Managing Director of PWC Healthcare, Prof. Rudi Van de Velde, CIO of the University Hospital Brussels, and Prof. Jana Zvárová, Director of EUROMICE and Editor-in-Chief of the European Journal for Biomedical Informatics.

This year's IT @ Networking Awards was again a display of practical, hands-on innovative IT and medical technology installations with proven results. An impressive 81 percent of participants rated the quality of the first day MINDBYTE presentations better or much better in comparison to other events, an overwhelming 93 percent did so for the next day's WORKBENCH presentation. Indeed, the competitive element sparked lively and interesting discussions, facilitating an exceptional level of learning. We ask presenters to structure their presentations according to the six submission criteria. This creates a universal template to enhance the understanding of all stakeholders within medical professions. In particular, criteria number four, which focuses on the "difficulty" element, was very well received with over 30 percent impact of the total vote. It is vital to discuss the challenges and problems of each solution openly.

This issue of Healthcare IT Management presents the contestants in detail. Our audience voted the "Healthcare for the Rural Poor" project from India as first prize winner. Presenter Prachi Shukla's statement that "The biggest challenge we face is that we never know how many hours electricity we have during a day. Sometimes it is only two hours" gave the audience a reality check, reflecting the somewhat different criteria for evaluating problems experienced in poverty-stricken regions.

Abstract submission for the *IT @ Networking Awards 2012*, which will be held in Brussels from 18 – 19 January 2012, is already open. Inspired by this year's winners, submit your project before 17 June 2011. To ensure the highest level of cross-departmental understanding, we ask that each abstract will follow the 'six criteria' framework. This common structure allows comparison between the varied and different solutions based on the same parameters of understanding.

Europe and the US recently signed a memorandum of understanding in respect to a "cooperation surrounding health related information and communication technologies". In the past the Commission too often surrendered the interests of European citizens to the US administration (take personal data protection or environment issues, for example). Once again, I feared the worst. Fortunately, this memorandum is different and it will be up to the European IT community to keep the lead in this process, in particular as the Obama health plan will generate a much higher commercial impact than many of the European framework programmes have ever done. Commission ICT guru Ilias Iakovidis made it clear, that from now on we need to put pilot programmes into real-life action. HITM has been calling for a change in this direction since 2007. We have always held the belief that a practical approach is the way forward.

Our features cover advances in the integrated OR, have a look into highly developed GRID PACS applications and assess computer surveillance of antimicrobial resistance. The country focus features Cyprus and we examine a unique project that used robots to perform remote ultrasound on ambulatory patients, to stream emergency cases.

Finally, I wish to draw your attention to the e-health week, 10–12 May in the SYMA Center Budapest. This year's event will again host the European Commission's High Level Ministerial Conference and the World of Health IT Congress. HITM is a supporting partner. Please come to see us at booth 131 in the Partner Pavilion.

Enjoy reading this latest issue of Healthcare IT Management. For comments, suggestions and criticism, please contact me at any time.

Best Regards,

Christian Marolt

Published on : Fri, 24 Feb 2012