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### The Impact of the Economic Crisis on Radiology: Industry Urged to Continue Support

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#### Interviewee

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#### What is Your Opinion on the Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on Radiology?

The answer is complex because three kinds of parameters have to be taken into account: on one hand, large imaging manufacturers are mainly conglomerates, while on the other, expenditure on health is relatively nationalised in many countries. Finally, the economic crisis is affecting all regions of the world but to very different extents. In such a situation, there is reason to expect that economic policy within these large groups could eventually affect imaging, despite the fact that expenditure on health does not suddenly dry up due to stock market fluctuations. The areas most affected by the crisis will be communications expenditure: advertising and support for conferences and for training and research initiatives.

#### How Could the Industry Plan Their Investments into Medical Imaging Better, to Both Respect Shrinking Budgets, and the Continuing Need for Support of Healthcare?

This crisis is an opportunity for industry leaders to better analyse the support they must provide to the world of medical imaging. Rather than scatter their support across a range of events with little scope, they should consider concentrating their efforts on large European and national conferences. Furthermore, they should take into account the desire among the European Society of Radiology and the European Association of Nuclear Medicine to cooperate more extensively: why not combine the technological presentations for these large conferences? It is a unique opportunity: crises sometimes allow us to make important decisions.

#### Might the Numbers of Those Entering the Profession of Radiology Drop if There is a Cut in the Market?

I do not believe that there will be a general recession in the radiology market because, as I mentioned earlier, health expenditure cannot suddenly draw to a halt; having said that, radiology will be called upon in future to adapt its work organisation so as to allow broader access to imaging thanks to the industrial development of teleradiology. In Europe, European directives on cross-border healthcare are the precursor to a real revolution in the market for healthcare services' provision. Rather than a recession, I prefer to think of this as a climate prompting the development of new organisational structures. For instance, the practice of teleradiology will become more prevalent as it has now matured as an industry tool. In Europe, job allocations may begin to be extended to the "highest bidders", as is starting to happen in the United States.

#### How will Research be Affected?

I do not think that academic institutions will be affected by the crisis to the extent that they will be obliged to cut back on or interrupt their activities in research or innovation assessment. It is likely that in some countries, such as France, this crisis could be an opportunity to concentrate efforts on centres of excellence, which could indirectly see the funds available to these centres increase.

#### Can Industry Help to Lead Radiology and Other Healthcare Services Out of the Recession?

In order to cope with the recession, existing activities must be consolidated and new ones developed. Health professionals will come under increasing scrutiny to analyse the usefulness of tests carried out. The development of other activities will initially rely on the maintenance of research and innovation activities, without which the system would quickly be stifled. Radiology must serve as a catalyst for the development of information systems; regional and national PACS projects must be developed, creating a real industry of image circulation and storage. This must take place in coordination with national policies aimed at computerising health systems. Luckily, many imaging materials manufacturers have made extensive investments in these fields, and we must try to profit from this.

To conclude, the imaging industry has just experienced some very good years, with significant profits for manufacturers. Today, the situation is undoubtedly very difficult for them: it is unacceptable that after many profitable years it should be radiology that faces budgetary cuts, such as a reduction in support for large conferences and generally to large national and European radiology societies. Such an outcome would make everyone's life more complicated and in particular that of industrial operators as it would only serve in a very indirect way to cut back on the development and adoption of innovations in daily practices. In such a situation, it is most likely that there would be very strong reactions from the national and international communities.

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