Bridging the ‘bench to bedside’ gap and the widely accepted approach of multidisciplinarity are pivotal in advancing research and improving patient treatment and care. The reality of the implementation and measurable outcomes of both ideals generally translates into palpable debate between professional specialities and communities. In the relentless battle to eliminate cancer, much more can – and will – be done.

The recently announced collaboration between the European CanCer Organisation (ECCO) and the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) was happily received by the oncology community as a turning point in uniting forces, efforts and professionals across Europe.

**The Win–Win Spin**

ECCO exists to both uphold the right of all European cancer patients to the best possible treatment and care and promote interaction between all organisations involved in cancer research, education, treatment and care. ESMO represents one of the most implicated specialities in such interaction since medical oncology demands a scientific and academic base, a vision of developing and evaluating novel treatment methodologies and an involvement in total cancer care.

To deliver on multidisciplinarity and provide equal access to quality care, neither ECCO nor ESMO can stand alone – a reality that has united the two organisations. ESMO’s membership of ECCO represents a further step forwards in shaping a united front – the convergence of speciality organisations that share the same determination to uphold a coherent, concise and harmonised approach to tackling the second leading cause of death in Europe.

**A Mass Gathering of Cancer Science, Treatment and Technology**

One critical outcome of the collaboration is that the two leading educational opportunities in European oncology, the ECCO and ESMO Congresses, have been combined every other year. By fusing excellence and expertise, the joint ECCO and ESMO Multidisciplinary Congresses are set to draw record attendance through all-encompassing, comprehensive programmes of the highest calibre. Setting the standard for Congresses to come, the first ECCO–ESMO Congress will take place in Berlin on 20–24 September 2009.

**An Organised Approach to Oncopolicy**

Efforts aimed at strengthening oncopolicy will succeed only by standing united. Heterogeneity will fail. Cancer naturally poses a challenge in this respect since, unlike many other fields, it incorporates a multiplicity of inter-related disciplines. The time to get organised is now.

ESMO’s membership of ECCO will be crucial in road-mapping the collective campaign to create awareness of the needs of patients and encourage progressive thinking in cancer policy, training and education at the EU level. Never before has the oncology community been better situated to improve care and research interactivity across Europe.

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**ECCO’s Mission**

ECCO exists to:
- uphold the right of all European cancer patients to the best possible treatment and care; and
- promote interaction between all organisations involved in cancer research, education, treatment and care at the European level.

**Contact**

ECCO – the European CanCer Organisation
Avenue E Mounier, B3
B-1200 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 2 775 02 01
Fax: +32 2 775 02 00
E: info@ecco-org.eu
www.ecco-org.eu

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Alexander MM Eggermont is President of the European CanCer Organisation (ECCO) and a Professor and Head of Surgical Oncology at the Erasmus Medical Center–Daniel den Hoed Cancer Center in Rotterdam. He is immediate Past President of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC), Chair of the Steering Committee of the EORTC Network of Core Institutions and an active member of the EORTC Melanoma Group. He is Past Chair of the International Affairs Committee of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). Professor Eggermont serves on various scientific advisory boards of cancer institutes, cancer leagues and grant-funding programmes, and is a Board Member of various scientific societies and journals. He has received a number of awards for his scientific accomplishments and has published over 400 peer-reviewed articles, monographs and book chapters.

José Baselga is President of the European Society of Medical Oncology (ESMO), Chairman of the Medical Oncology Service and Director of the Division of Medical Oncology, Haematology, and Radiation Oncology at the Vall d’Hebron University Hospital in Barcelona and a Professor of Medicine at the Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona. Dr Baselga is a Member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the European CanCer Organisation (ECCO). He is also an active member of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), a past member of the Board of Directors of the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and a past member of the Board of Directors of the European Organisation for Research on Treatment of Cancer (EORTC).
See you at the joint
ECCO 15 and 34TH ESMO
Multidisciplinary Congress
BERLIN, 20-24 SEPTEMBER 2009

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