

# ERS Annual Congress



“AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF RESPIRATORY EXPERTS”

## Europe’s broadest forum for respiratory experts

With the aim of stimulating knowledge exchange among specialists in the field, our Annual Congress offers clinical investigators, scientists and industry the unique opportunity to interact and share information on respiratory medicine. The 2007 Congress marked the 17th held by our Society since the first in Brussels (Belgium). Although experiencing a slight drop in the number of attendees in comparison to the Munich Congress, the 2007 Stockholm Congress maintained the event’s tradition as one of the largest in the respiratory field, with 15,692 participants.

## A worldwide audience

The 2007 Congress was held at the Stockholm International Fairs and Congress Centre. This spacious venue was well suited to the needs of a broad-ranging programme of events. Excellent transport links to the

Centre meant that participants found it easy to take part in the Congress. Indeed, attendees came from across the world, with over 120 countries represented and high numbers attending from the USA (see table). More Swedish participants attended the Congress than ever before, and it is hoped that this will have a positive impact on recruitment and development of respiratory medicine in Sweden.

The National Societies Village was once again a prominent feature of the Congress. Positioned in a strategic position of high footfall, each of the 40 national societies represented was given their own stand on which to display information about their organisation. The presence of these societies at the Annual Congress allows us to strengthen our relationship with organisations from across the world, developing an international respiratory network and creating a broad forum of scientific exchange.

## ERS Sponsorship: facilitating valuable interaction

The ERS is aware that attendance at the Congress may be difficult for some, for economical reasons. To go some way to alleviating this, every year, our Society offers sponsorship to young non-medical scientists who have had an abstract accepted and to delegates from low-income countries. In 2007, we were proud to support the attendance of 575 Congress participants. In this way, our Society aids knowledge development, and supports and advances research around the world.

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Table – The top 10 attending countries

Country	Number of participants
UK	1,168
Germany	1,054
France	884
Italy	880
Spain	781
Sweden	676
Turkey	554
USA	548
Greece	509
The Netherlands	491



Gunilla Hedlin



Sven-Erik Dahlén

“After 2 years of preparations, the 2007 ERS Congress was a week packed with round-the-clock activities. It was rewarding to see the dedication of all who made this meeting such a success and ran all features of the Congress with ease, including well-established aspects, like the Abstract Print Zone, Major Symposia and Thematic Posters, and new features, such as Lunchtime Sessions. Thanks should go to the ERS staff, the Stockholm International Fairs, and all other supporting organisations. Above all, we would like to thank all the participants and those who prepared lectures and other forms of presentations. Despite the tremendous development of electronic communication, we believe there is nothing like face-to-face meetings to promote creative interaction, to the benefit of patients with respiratory diseases.”

*Gunilla Hedlin and Sven-Erik Dahlén, Congress Chairs*

## Leading the way in new features and increased collaboration

The 2007 Congress featured several ventures that were new to the event. In recognition of the fact that most patients are primarily seen by general practitioners, the Congress began with a Primary Care day. The aim was to break down the barriers between different specialities in order to improve diagnosis and treatment of respiratory diseases, an initiative we hope to develop in years to come.

### The Scientific Programme: central to knowledge exchange

Each year, the Scientific Programme Committee works hard to ensure that it builds upon our Congress' firmly established reputation as an event featuring the highest-quality science. It selects only the best Symposia proposals, and all abstracts are subjected to a peer-review process before acceptance. Attendees at the Stockholm Congress were able to choose from a broad programme, featuring:

- 55 Symposia
- 6 Grand Rounds
- 16 Hot Topics
- 102 Thematic Poster sessions
- 80 Oral Presentations
- 72 E-Communication sessions

In a special session that was in fitting with the Congress' location, Nobel Laureate Prof. Bengt Samuelsson gave an overview of his research and, for the first time in public, his colleagues presented a new class of biomolecules to a large attending audience.

Another new feature of the 2007 Congress was the Lunchtime Seminars. The Seminars included topics such as “How to write scientific papers: an editor's advice” and “How to get the Nobel Prize”, as well as reports from ERS Fellowship recipients. The positive feedback received and the high attendance attracted, have encouraged our Society to organise further Lunchtime Sessions at future Congresses.

### Congress services E-Posters

E-Posters were successfully introduced at our 2006 Congress and were once again featured in Stockholm. All authors of accepted abstracts were given the opportunity to create an electronic poster, offering them extended visibility of their work throughout the Congress. At the 2007 Congress, a total of 80 computers enabled attendees to consult over 2,100 E-Posters and to communicate with authors through an online chat forum.

As E-Posters are fast becoming a regular feature of the Congress, our Society will work to develop the platform, to enable attendees to fully benefit from this convenient forum of respiratory knowledge.



The Congress was opened by Prof. Harriet Wallberg-Henriksson of the Karolinska Institutet, famous for awarding the Nobel Prize in Medicine

## The Abstract Print Zone

In previous years, an Abstract Book, featuring all abstracts presented at the Congress, was distributed to every attendee on arrival at the event. Growing concern that the Abstract Book was no longer appropriate, due to its large size and impact on the environment, led to the development of the Abstract Print Zone, which was premiered at the 2005 Congress. For the third year in a row, when registering to attend the 2007 Congress, participants were offered the option to pre-order a copy of the Abstract Book for a fee or to make use of the on-site Abstract Print Zone facilities.

The Abstract Print Zone allows delegates to access and print details of individual abstracts from 28 computer terminals, instead of carrying the heavy book around with them. This has proved to be an enormous success and will continue to be a feature of our Congress.

## Stockholm Congress Committee

**Chairs:** Sven-Erik Dahlén, Gunilla Hedlin.  
**Committee members:** William MacNee, Benoit Nemery, Martin F. Muers, Ulrich Costabel, Gerhard W. Sybrecht, Torsten T. Bauer.

## Sparking media interest

The ERS Congress once again generated a high level of media interest through press activities taking place during the event and beyond. A total of 88 journalists attended the Congress, giving them the opportunity to attend the 6 press conferences organised by our Society. Topics covered included: climate change and respiratory health, and the new threat of extensively drug-resistant TB.

Many members of the press also covered the Congress from the comfort of their own offices, with 92 journalists registering to receive our embargoed press release by email. Press release titles included: "MP3 players could soon replace good old stethoscopes" and "Stem cells to repair the lungs: highly promising results from a British team".

Through such press conferences and press releases, our Society has been able to reach out to a very broad audience across the world. Articles stemming from Congress press activities have since appeared in *The Times Online*, *The Tehran Times*, *Il Messaggero* and *Scientific American.com*.

Congress Chairs Sven-Erik Dahlén and Gunilla Hedlin were also able to generate media interest within Stockholm, through an article published in the Swedish morning paper *Dagens Nyheter*, which discussed lung diseases and the global need to fight them. The article appeared on the first day of the Congress in connection with the European Lung Foundation-organised spirometry event (see page 25 for more).



International journalists filed reports on ERS press releases and conferences to prominent world media