

# Message from the President



Ronald Dahl, ERS President  
2004–2005

The European Respiratory Society (ERS) is a young society, which has been constantly growing since its formation in 1990. **In 2004, the membership grew by 10% and we now have over 7,500 members.** With the introduction of new membership categories, set up specifically to make the ERS more accessible to low-income countries, we hope to see the numbers rise even further. This will strengthen our commitment in being the **European voice** to promote and improve lung health through research, education and advocacy.

The ERS has made a number of significant developments in 2004, contributing to its continued success. The ERS Annual Congress is now not only Europe's largest annual scientific gathering in respiratory medicine but also the world's, with nearly **15,000 participants** at the Glasgow Congress in 2004.

The Society is dedicated to boosting public and political awareness of the importance of lung health. In 2004, great efforts were made to raise **the profile of respiratory disease at the European Union (EU)** level, specifically in the policy areas of research, environment and tobacco control. Projects undertaken by the ERS included its essential contribution to the ASPECT (Analysis of the Science and Policy for European Control of Tobacco) consortium, and subsequent publication of the European Commission funded ASPECT report in October 2004: *"Tobacco or Health in the European Union: Past, Present and Future"*.

The ERS is also working closely with European National Societies, to influence EU Members of Parliament and national ministries to ensure that respiratory diseases are included in the final EU **7th Research Framework Programme (FP7)**, to be decided in the EU parliament in October 2005. Another important development in 2004, was the establishment of the **Forum of European Respiratory Societies (FERS)** which will lead to a unified effort and greater collaboration between European and national societies, strengthening their ability to influence governmental policy agendas.

The European Respiratory Society Journals (Publications Office) had an extremely successful year. They made the switch to a new journal hosting platform for the *European Respiratory Journal* "Highwire" and as a result saw the hit

rates increase from **5,000 per month to over 100,000 per week.** Financially, for the first time, they also made a net profit, largely due to the increased request for reprints.

An important communication tool for our members is the ERS website. The old website had a limited capacity and could not be expanded in direct relationship to the increased ERS activities. Therefore, a new website was developed and launched in May 2004. Since the launch the average monthly hit rates have increased from 148,648 to 197,326. Which means we now have an **extra 584,137** hits on our site every year.

The **ERS School launched a new educational journal** in September 2004, *Breathe – Continuing Medical Education for Respiratory Professionals* and the initial response from readers has been excellent. The ERS School Courses have also seen their popularity grow since they were first set up in 2003. In fact the number of external courses were doubled in 2004 and some even have to be repeated in 2005 to fulfil the demands. In 2004, the ERS School took the important decision to initiate a Task Force to help define the standard of education and training for pulmonologists across Europe. From this they hope to **develop a recognised curriculum** and provide high-quality teaching material to fulfil these needs. The ultimate aim being to develop a European training programme which will result in a **European Certificate in Pulmonology.**

Collaborations and alliances with other professional organisations have grown during the year. Cooperation with the American Thoracic Society (ATS) included the development of the first ever **web-based guidelines** on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

The many developments and initiatives within the ERS in 2004, have only been possible through the dedicated work of the ERS officers, who through their time, knowledge and expertise provide the resources necessary to ensure the continued success of the Society, supported by the staff at the ERS Headquarters in Lausanne, the ERS Brussels office and the European Respiratory Society Journals office in Sheffield.