



Dear ECHSA Members and friends,

I am writing, particularly to those of you who were not able to attend our recent Annual Meeting in Cascais, to give you a summary update.

As you know, the Meeting took place in beautiful Cascais by the sea, just outside Lisbon, spectacularly organized and hosted by our President Jose Fragata. The meeting was by all accounts a resounding success: It featured a state-of-the-art Symposium on Pediatric VADs put together by Luca Vricella and Antonio Amodeo, with an outstanding faculty from Europe and the USA, and also - a first for an ECHSA Meeting - *a hands-on* lunch symposium on the Ross operation; enthusiastically appraised, particularly by our younger Members.

There were great invited lectures by leaders in our field, including Bob Anderson, who lectured in honor of the memory of Francis Fontan, Carl Backer, President of CHSS, Pedro del Nido from Boston Children's Hospital, Sylvie Di Filippo representing the AEPC, as well as fantastic ECHSA Database research lectures by Tjark Ebels and Bohdan Maruszewski, and relevant lectures by Roxane McKay from the Mayo Clinic and Jeff Jacobs from the STS National Database.

Exciting developments of continuing improvements and new tools were announced regarding our Congenital Database, as well as Clinical Research news regarding important publications from the database and multi-institutional studies, and, also, updates for on-going multi-institutional studies and new study proposals. Of course, there were the traditional excellent best-worst case and video presentation sessions, and high quality oral and poster presentations, with lively discussions in the best ECHSA tradition.

The Meeting's climax was the landmark Presidential Address by Jose Fragata ([which you can find at this link](#)). The detailed scientific program can be found at [this link](#), and the abstracts, which will be published in the World Journal of Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery, can be found [at this link](#). All the presentations are available in the Members' only section of our website at [this link](#). Needless to say, the great scientific program was complemented by a marvelous social program, specially and meticulously organized in every detail by Jose and his wife Isabella, a program second to none, in the greatest ECHSA European tradition! Beautiful photographs of the social activities can be found at [this link](#).





In the Business Session, Jose Fragata delivered a very significant report, an appraisal of his four-year tenure as ECHSA President, a report which is also available at [this link](#). In this presentation, all can appreciate the incredible

amount of work which was accomplished under Jose's leadership; work which has ushered ECHSA into a new era, transforming it into a dynamic Scientific Society offering amazing value to its members and invaluable service to our congenital community, ultimately, to our patients. We all owe great appreciation and thanks to Jose Fragata as a visionary ECHSA President!

Although Jose Fragata could undoubtedly continue to provide immensely valuable services to ECHSA as President, he decided to step down from the Presidency and the Board and recommended to the Board leadership renewal. The proposed changes were unanimously approved by the Board and were voted for by the Assembly at the Business Meeting: I was very much honored to be proposed and elected as new ECHSA President. I thank you all for your support and pledge to serve ECHSA to the best of my abilities, in the tradition of all past ECHSA Presidents, with the challenge of reaching the bar which was just set so high by Jose Fragata. I know that I can count on his and on all your help in fulfillment of our Associations' goals. I will have great support at the Board by the old and the new Members: **Morten Helvind**, who was elected as the new Secretary General, having served on the Board for several years. Tjark Ebels stepped down from the position of Treasurer, Board Member, and Chair of the Database Committee, as his career has lured him to new great administrative and university challenges at home. Tjark has made fantastic contributions leading the Database to innovative developments and enhanced global reach, contributions for which he received a special ECHSA Recognition Award! **Ilkka Mattila**, who has also been serving on the Board, has been elected as our new Treasurer to replace Tjark, and **Vladimiro Vida**, having greatly contributed to ECHSA's scientific output over the years with many important scientific studies, was also elected as new Board Member. Regarding the Database, we are grateful that **Bohdan Maruszewski**, Director of the ECHSA Congenital Database, who has served as its great pillar for many years, has graciously accepted to also assume the position of Database Committee Chair vacated by Tjark Ebels (who has agreed to stay on the Database Committee, assisting with its scientific work), thus ensuring solid and inspired continuity of the leadership of our Database. Finally, but also very important, I would like to take the opportunity to welcome to our community the elected new ECHSA members:

**Full Members:** *Thierry Bove, Timmy Au Wing Kuk, and Claudia Herbst*

**Junior Members:** *Ivaylo Mitev, Rui Cerejo*





**ECHSA**  
EUROPEAN CONGENITAL HEART SURGEONS ASSOCIATION

Håkan Berggren, a long-time ECHSA Member, who has retired from active practice, is now a Senior Member. Contact details of members, old and new, can be found [at this link](#).

As you know, an ECHSA Bulletin has already been launched, edited by Alexander Kadner, as a means to improve communication with our Members, and the new issue will be circulated in the fall. We hope that the new website will also be very helpful in this regard, I encourage everyone to use it! Needless to say, please do not hesitate to write to anyone at the Board and to me personally with any comments, suggestions, or ideas which may be helpful to our common goals, as we start planning for next year's Annual Meeting: it will be held in Sofia **from 20-22 June 2019**, in collaboration with the World Society for Pediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery, co-hosted by Stojan Lazarov and Christo Tchervenkov.

Have a great summer vacation!

With warmest wishes,

George Sarris

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "George E. Sarris, M.D.". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a blue line that extends to the right.

ECHSA President

