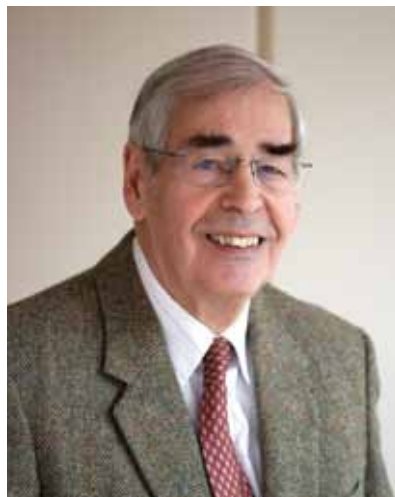


**Aldo Torsoli**

*Aldo Torsoli (b.1924), 'the father' of UEGF.*

<b>1 Preface</b>	Peter Milla
<b>2 Foreword</b>	Colm O'Morain, UEGF President
<b>3 The birth of UEGF and of UEGW 1988 – 1997</b>	Peter Milla & Hermon Dowling
<b>4 UEGF and UEGW development: From National Societies to House of European Gastroenterology</b>	Juan-R. Malagelada
<b>Development of the Committees:</b>	
• <b>Scientific</b>	Michael Farthing
• <b>Education</b>	
• <b>Public Affairs</b>	
• <b>Future Trends</b>	Michael Farthing
<b>Professional administration and financing</b>	Katharina Buder & Peter Milla
<b>5 The Members of UEGF</b>	Presidents of Federated Societies
<b>6 Significant figures of UEGF</b>	
<b>7 Personal Reflections</b>	
(a)	Hermon Dowling
(b)	Peter Milla
(c)	Juan-R. Malagelada
(d)	Guido Tytgat
(e)	Christoph Beglinger
(f)	Chris Hawkey
(g)	G.P. van Berge Henegouwen
(h)	Massimo Crespi
(i)	Alberto Montori
(j)	Rolf Hultcrantz
<b>8 Appendix</b>	
<b>9 Acknowledgements</b>	



**Peter Milla**  
*UEGF Treasurer 2003-2011*  
 Emeritus Professor of Paediatric  
 Gastroenterology and Nutrition, UCL Institute  
 of Child Health, University College London.

**Over the last 20 years it has been a privilege not only to have witnessed the phenomenal growth of UEGF in latter years but also the first faltering steps of the nascent organisation at that first UEGW in 1992.**

In closing the address of the opening ceremony of the First UEGW on the Pnyx Hill in Athens on September 25, 1996, Constantine Arvanitakis, Local President of the 1st UEGW, stated: "We must not forget that there is no pain like the pain of a new idea, but we should also remember that nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come. The United European Gastroenterology Federation and the Annual United European Gastroenterology Week is indeed the accomplishment of an idea whose time has come".

In this the 20th anniversary of the UEGF it is timely to record the events that have resulted in the organisation that we know today. The heady ever spiralling evolution of UEGF and the incredible success of UEGW have proved the prescient statement made in the most ancient assembly forum of Europe 20 years ago. It has been a pleasure to edit this history which would not have been possible without the unstinting cooperation of many of the significant players in the evolution of the Federation and last but not least the editorial assistance provided by Katharina Buder at the Secretariat in the House of European Gastroenterology, Vienna, my thanks to them all.



**Colm O'Morain**  
*UEGF President 2011-2012*  
 Professor Emeritus Trinity College Dublin and  
 Consultant Gastroenterologist.

**It is a great honour for me to be President of the United European Gastroenterology Federation on the auspicious occasion of its 20th anniversary. I have seen the organisation grow and flourish during my professional lifetime. This small book records the formation and development of the UEGF from its first faltering steps to its present day health and strength.**

The annual congress gives Gastroenterologists an opportunity to present their research in Europe. The appeal of the meeting attracts Gastroenterologists from all over the world. It now represents the premier annual Gastroenterology meeting in the world. The attraction of busy, cosmopolitan, and culturally rich European cities is an added bonus to our visitors from afar.

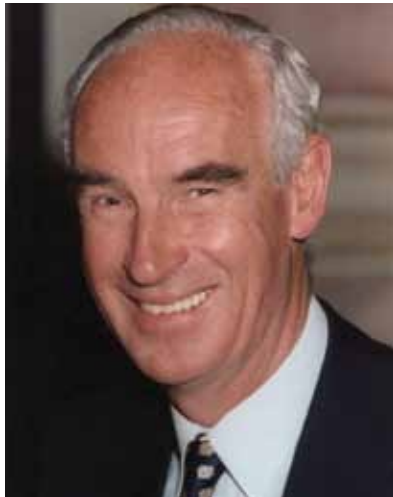
Prudent financial management has helped us to be stable and economically viable. The financial success, which stems from the annual meeting, funds activities of the federation throughout the year carried out by our committees. It is comforting to note that the UEGF is considered to be the voice of European Gastroenterology in lay and political circles. This is now recognised at the European Union level.

The branding of the organisation has been a priority and will be launched together with this book in April of this year. Our other priorities for development include a 'White Book' documenting the burden of gastrointestinal disease and the development of a world-class journal.

The federation has a home in which to achieve its goals. I am delighted that we have found such a home in the 'House of European Gastroenterology' in central Vienna, which will be a welcoming place for all our activities and an excellent work environment for our dedicated secretariat. We hope it will be utilised as a venue by all of our members.

I am privileged to lead these endeavours and look forward to serving all groups involved in Gastroenterology.

## The birth of UEGF and of UEGW 1988 – 1997



**Hermon Dowling**

*Secretary-General UEGF 1992-1995*

Emeritus Professor Guy's Hospital Medical School, University of London.

**Peter Milla**

*UEGF Treasurer 2003-2011*

Emeritus Professor of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition, UCL Institute of Child Health, University College London.

**Given the health and strength of the present-day Federation on this, the 20th anniversary of the first United European Gastroenterology Week (UEGW), it is hard to imagine that the first few years of the UEGF's existence were often difficult, and sometimes turbulent.**

The aim of this chapter is to provide a balanced account of how the Federation was conceived, and how it evolved, during this initial period. Although this a personal account based largely on memory, it is backed up by as much corroborative evidence as possible.

One of us (RHD) became involved in this story in 1988, when he became Secretary-General of Association des Societes Nationales Europeennes et Mediterraneennes de Gastroenterologie (ASNEMGE) One of "the seven sisters" – the original founding members of the UEGF. This chapter begins by summarising ASNEMGE's role in establishing the UEGF.

### The role of ASNEMGE, and the pivotal importance of the "Roma '88" meeting, in the genesis of the UEGF

ASNEMGE was born in 1947 out of the prewar Societe Internationale de Gastroenterologie. Its principal aim was to provide a forum for like-minded gastroenterologists from around Europe and the Mediterranean basin, to meet and exchange clinical and scientific ideas, and to consolidate friendship and fellowship amongst its members. For many years, its principal activity was to organise the quadrennial **International Congresses of Gastroenterology**. (With the advent of gastrointestinal endoscopy, these International Congresses were later organised jointly by both ASNEMGE and the ESGE). However, ASNEMGE also served as a political forum since each National Member Society or Association was invited to send representatives to the business meetings, which took place at each Congress. At the business meeting

of the Lisbon International Congress in 1984, Rome was chosen as the venue for the 1988 meeting – with Aldo Torsoli as President, and Luigi Barbara as Secretary, of the local organising committee.

Shortly before this "Roma '88" meeting, the Secretary-General, Ludovic (Ludo) Standaert, and the Treasurer, Achille D'Haens, of ASNEMGE signalled their intention to step down from the ASNEMGE Council (after 32 years); and at the business meeting in Rome, they were replaced by Hermon Dowling and John Bennett respectively – albeit in a somewhat unconventional way. (Standaert simply announced to the meeting that he had "taken soundings" amongst the representatives of the National Societies and Associations, and that the two British candidates enjoyed the support of the majority).

### The dream of an annual European gastroenterology meeting.

The Roma '88 Congress took place during an unseasonably hot September and on the evening of the business meeting, the author (RHD) and his wife dined al fresco in a nearby trattoria with Professor and Mrs Sid Phillips from the Mayo Clinic. During dinner, the newly-elected Secretary-General discussed the seed of an idea that had been germinating in his mind for several months. He believed that the time was ripe for a serious annual meeting of Gastroenterology within Europe – similar to the prestigious and highly successful Digestive Disease Weeks (DDWs) in the US. In addition to educational updates, state-of-the-art lectures and panel discussions, the emphasis at future meetings should be on the presentation of high-quality original results. The core scientific programme should be protected, and should not have to compete with simultaneous industry-sponsored events – as happened both at the International (European) and World Congresses of Gastroenterology.

As a former editor of "Gastroenterology", Sid Phillips sat on the Governing Board of the American Gastroenterological Association. Although he had some reservations about the value of yet another large gastroenterology meeting, he acknowledged that the AGA's Governing Board had been concerned about the ever-growing numbers of participants at the DDWs. He conceded that there was more than enough exciting original work from Europe to justify a separate annual gastroenterology meeting there – perhaps in the autumn – separated from the DDWs by about six months.

The following morning, the incoming President (Aldo Torsoli) and the new Secretary-General (Hermon Dowling) of ASNEMGE met for their first informal business meeting during which Dowling launched the idea that the quadrennial International Congresses should be replaced by an annual, scientifically-orientated European meeting. In support of this proposal, he recounted his discussions with Sid Phillips the previous evening and explained that reactions from senior opinion-leaders in European gastroenterology and hepatology, about his proposal – including Gustav Paumgartner (EASL), Guido Tytgat (EAGE) amongst others were supportive of an annual GI meeting in Europe.

### Modifying the dream: the importance of cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Initially, Torsoli was sceptical. He felt that it would be a mistake for ASNEMGE and ESGE to "go it alone". He predicted that the idea of an annual scientific meeting in European Gastroenterology was unlikely to be original. The EAGE, for example, had been growing in strength and it too was planning to organise European DDWs. Subsequently EAGE organised meetings took place in Vienna, Amsterdam and Graz.

Torsoli also pointed out that several other sub-specialty organisations had long been holding high-quality meetings in Europe. These included EASL, EPC, ESPGAN (as it then was) and the CICD (later renamed the ISDS). He therefore suggested that ASNEMGE should organise an ad hoc exploratory meeting with these organisations, to canvas their opinions about a possible collaborative approach.

#### Informal soundings and the ad hoc exploratory meeting.

Over the next few months, consultations continued. Reactions to a “serious” annual scientific meeting in Gastroenterology within Europe were generally favourable. Dowling may have had the initial idea and the energy and enthusiasm to drive it forward, but without Torsoli’s persuasive charm, it is doubtful if Dowling’s evangelical plans would ever have come to fruition. It took more than six months to convene an ad hoc meeting of potential partners in this venture. The first such meeting took place in Rome during April 1989, at the headquarters of the Italian Society of Gastroenterology – (formerly Torsoli’s private house). In addition to representatives from ASNEMGE (Aldo Torsoli, John Bennett and Hermon Dowling), Torsoli had invited friends (mainly but not exclusively, from Italy) to represent the various European Gastroenterology organisations, listed above. These included Vincenzo Speranza (CICD), Alberto Montori (ESGE), and Günter Krejs from Austria(EAGE).

This first exploratory meeting was far from easy. Initially, some of those present were suspicious and reluctant to consider anything which might represent a threat to their existing organisations. At times, the meeting became tense and at one point it seemed that the initiative might implode. Ultimately, however, goodwill prevailed – largely as a result of Aldo Torsoli’s diplomacy. It was agreed that the next meeting should be the first formal meeting

of the Interim Coordinating Council of what, subsequently, was to become the UEGF.

#### The Interim Coordinating Council of the UEGF.

The next meeting of the **Interim Coordinating Council** was hosted by Vincenzo Speranza in an idyllic mountain setting near L’Aquila, some two hours east of Rome. At that meeting, it was agreed that the Interim Council should have two representatives from each of the seven sisters. An outline constitution was drafted and the first officers on the steering committee were elected. Although Torsoli had chaired the exploratory ad hoc meeting, he declined to accept the Chairmanship of the Interim Committee, in favour of Speranza. Initially, John Bennett was elected as Treasurer and Hermon Dowling as Secretary of the Interim Committee. However, both these individuals were from ASNEMGE and the meeting decided that there should be not more than one representative from each of the seven sisters, in the three “executive” posts (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer). To enable his ASNEMGE colleague to become secretary, John Bennett generously stood down from the Treasurership, after serving in this post for only 30 minutes! He was replaced by Alberto Montori (ESGE) who continued to serve as Treasurer of the UEGF for many years. However, in recognition of his valuable contributions, Bennett was co-opted to remain on the Council as a non-voting member.

Meetings of the Interim Co-ordinating Council continued until 1990 when an extraordinary general meeting of ASNEMGE was convened by Torsoli and Dowling in Sydney, during the World Congress of Gastroenterology. At that meeting, they “went public” by seeking and obtaining from the national societies an official mandate (and indeed a ringing endorsement) for the nascent Federation and its plans for future UEGWs. From that time onwards, the interim Council became “definitive” and the UEGF was officially born.

#### The importance of Italian contributions during the early days of the UEGF.

Italy played a prominent role in the early days of this Interim Co-ordinating Council. Thus it generously hosted several of the initial Council meetings at a time when the committee had little or no money. One of these was organised on the Tyrrhenian island of Ponza by the other ESGE representative, Massimo Crespi, who regularly took his holidays there.

As previously, negotiations at the Ponza meeting were sometimes difficult. Nonetheless, several important agreements were reached. First, with John Bennett’s penchant for choosing the most appropriate and concise English phraseology, and with the help of a Swiss lawyer, Jürgen Bronniman, the definitive statutes were agreed. Second, a plan for distribution of any profits generated from the UEGW was agreed, which, until recently, was known as “the Ponza formula”.

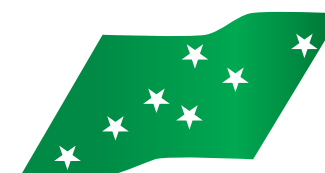
Our Italian colleagues also played a significant part in the design for the UEGF logo – a green flag bearing seven stars: one for each of the seven founding organisations – a design developed by Aldo Torsoli. They also promoted the appointment of a permanent professional congress organiser or “core PCO” – to represent the UEGF’s interests and to liaise with the local PCOs. This was “Studio EGA”, a small but friendly and efficient Italian company run by two charismatic sisters: Emma and Cristina Aru. The choices of the Federation’s Swiss legal adviser, Jürgen Bronniman, and of its bank in Geneva, were also based on the experience of an Italian colleague on the UEGF Council. Both appointments were successful – aided



01 Isola di Ponza



02 Interim Co-ordinating Council 1991



## UNITED EUROPEAN GASTROENTEROLOGY FEDERATION

03 UEGF Flag with seven stars for each of the “Seven Sisters”



no doubt by Switzerland's reputation for neutrality and the then competitive interest rates and charges of the Geneva bank in question.

### Evolution of UEGF: a bumpy ride.

The evolution of the UEGF, and of its annual scientific meetings (the UEGWs), is essentially one and the same. For the most part, it is a happy story of enormous progress and great success. There were, however, a few major setbacks on the way.

The first of these took place during a UEGF Council meeting at the Drei Konigen Hotel, in Basel. It was a particularly tense meeting during which diametrically opposite views were advanced by proponents who undoubtedly believed passionately in their opposing convictions. It should have been possible to resolve these differences, democratically. Although votes were taken, there were allegations of a "stitch up", and that votes had been "bought" – by persuading individual Council members to support the pressure group, in exchange for favours during the subsequent agenda. Despite the vote, several representatives threatened to take legal action against their fellow councillors. Fortunately, this threat never materialised but the damage had been done, tensions remained and it was a long time before harmonious interpersonal relationships resumed.

The second traumatic episode took place in Birmingham, during the site visit there by representatives of the UEGF Council and the core PCO (Cristina Aru from Studio EGA). Despite valid concerns about the limited number of hotel rooms in the vicinity of an otherwise excellent conference centre, the site visit had gone well and the visitors were pleased with the facilities and plans on offer. However, the basic problem was a subtle battle for organisational control between the Federation and the host society – concerning,

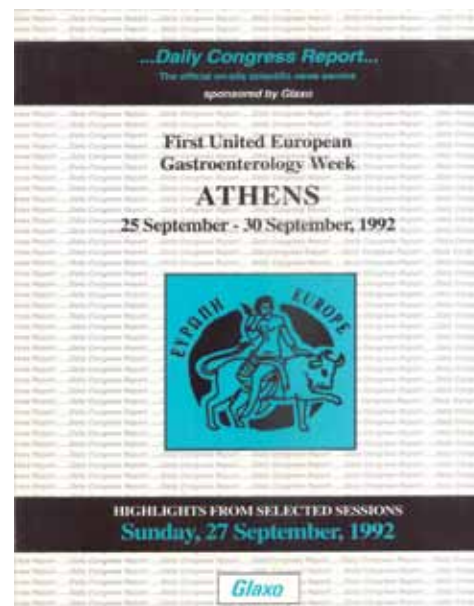
amongst other things, eligibility for travel and hotel expenses for: invited speakers, session chairmen, postgraduate course faculty, UEGF council members, other "VIPs" and the relative roles and authority of the two PCOs.

The visit ended with a difficult meeting between the visitors and representatives from the British Society of Gastroenterology (BSG) and the local PCO. Dowling found himself in a difficult position as both Secretary of the UEGF and President-elect of the BSG and Chairman-elect of the LOC for the Birmingham meeting. He understood the British viewpoint but as the UEGF secretary, he found it difficult and embarrassing when this viewpoint was expressed forcefully, and at times hurtfully, to the visitors. Despite the resultant "ruffling of feathers", the UEGF survived, and indeed thrived. Moreover, given the subsequent success of the Birmingham UEGW, the traumas of the site visit were soon forgiven – if not completely forgotten. More importantly valuable lessons were learnt which helped to shape the future of the UEGF and its Weeks.

Before describing the next phase of the Federation's history, let us first review, briefly, the history of how the UEGWs were launched, and how they progressed over the first few years.

### The first five years of the UEGWs

The first UEGW was, in fact, a UEGW in name only. The 1992 meeting in Athens was organised by Constantine Arvanitakis and colleagues from the Hellenic Society, as the last of the old-style quadrennial International Congresses and the first of the UEGWs. In practice, the UEGF had little input into the organisation of the Greek meeting – apart from its role at the historic opening ceremony held in the open, at the iconic Athenian site of the Pnyx Hill: a memorable occasion, rich in drama and grandiloquent in speeches.



04 UEGW Athens 1992  
The first UEGW poster

The second UEGW was held in Barcelona during 1993, with Juan-Ramon Malagelada as the local Chairman. It was a considerable success and, with the benefit of hindsight, the '93 Week was also important for the future of the Federation, for at least two reasons.

1. The meeting took place at a difficult time, economically, and there had been fears that the number of registrants might be disappointingly low – in the end this proved to be groundless.
2. The Barcelona meeting was organised before the UEGF Council had developed an agreed set of rules for: – running the UEGWs, involving biomedical industry, and for budgetary control of the meeting.

Given this organisational vacuum, it is perhaps not surprising that the local



05 Constantine Arvanitakis  
Organiser of the first UEGW

organising chairman (LOC) and his team insisted on a large degree of autonomy in running the meeting.

Although the second UEGW worked well, there was disquiet about the level of sponsorship demanded from pharmaceutical companies. But, the resultant tensions were valuable to the UEGF Council since they helped to identify problem areas, and to catalyse necessary changes for future meetings. This led to setting-up the UEGF-BMI (biomedical industry) liaison committee which became a model of its kind. It stimulated the UEGF to formalise the bidding and selection process for future meetings; and for drawing up contractual arrangements – not only with the LOCs but also with the Congress centres and the local PCOs. It also consolidated arrangements for site visits to future potential UEGW venues.



06 UEGW Athens 1992  
Org. C. Arvanitakis



07 UEGW Barcelona 1993  
Org. J-R. Malagelada



08 UEGW Oslo 1994  
Org. E. Schruppf



09 UEGW Berlin 1995  
Org. R. Arnold



10 UEGW Paris 1996  
Org. R. Lambert



11 UEGW Birmingham 1997  
Org. H. Dowling

By the time of the third UEGW in Oslo (1994), the UEGF had made considerable progress and the division of responsibility between the UEGF Council and the Local Organising Committee had been agreed. For the first time, a formal site visit was made in advance of the meeting – to ensure that arrangements for the Week were progressing satisfactorily. In that year, however, the quadrennial World Congress of Gastroenterology was taking place in Los Angeles and the UEGF was under great pressure from the World Organisation (and the BMI) to abandon its European meeting. By comparison with today's UEGWs, the Norwegian meeting, chaired by Erik Schruppf, was small but the quality was high and it was considered very successful.

The bidding process to select future venues for the UEGWs ensured that future hosts could plan ahead, up to four years in advance. Thus, the UEGF Council selected Berlin for the fourth UEGW (1995), under the local organising chairmanship of Rudi Arnold; and Paris for the fifth annual meeting (1996), masterminded by René Lambert and his colleagues from France. As early as 1993, the UEGF Council awarded the sixth UEGW (1997) to the British Society of Gastroenterology, in Birmingham. Therefore, to avoid potential conflicts of interest, Dowling resigned from the Secretaryship of the UEGF and was replaced in January 1994 by Peter Jansen from the Netherlands. In its day, the Birmingham meeting was judged to have been the most successful yet – in terms of organisation, scientific standards and financial success.

Over the crucial first six years of the UEGWs, the number of participants grew from approximately 2000 in Athens to around 7200 in Birmingham. Despite the sometimes “bumpy ride”, the early years of the UEGF and its Weeks were enormously exciting, challenging and stimulating but, above all, they were enjoyable and rewarding. The real reward, however, has been to witness the exponential growth and palpable success of the Federation – as described in the subsequent chapters of this brief history.



12 Peter Jansen  
Chairman 1994-1995

## UEGF and UEGW development: From National Societies to House of European Gastroenterology



**Juan Ramon Malagelada** UEGF President 2008-2009,  
Secretary General 1997-2005

Consultant and Associate Professor of Medicine, Digestive System Research Unit, Hospital Universitari Vall d'Hebron and Autonomous University of Barcelona.

**The development of the UEGF and the UEGW from the earliest days has been inextricably linked one with the other. The UEGW succeeded on two important counts. First, the meeting received a good mix of abstracts from many different European countries and second it gained the backing of industrial sponsors that from then on became committed to help support a broad European meeting on an annual basis.**

UEGWs, at the time, attracted mostly well established gastroenterologists. For instance, at the 1995 Berlin UEGW only 10% of attendees were young gastroenterologists in training or basic scientists. Eight percent of attendees were nurses. At 1997 Birmingham UEGW 1466 Abstracts were submitted, of which 192 were accepted as oral or video presentations. A substantial number of delegates at the meeting came from outside Europe with, 63 from Japan, 60 from Korea or 45 from USA.

Then, in 1998 the World Gastroenterology Organisation persuaded UEGF to join the World Congress of Gastroenterology that was held in Vienna. Thus, there was no independent UEGW in 1998. The interruption was perceived as a hitch in the maturing process of the European meeting and the UEGF Council pledged not to interrupt the annual sequence of UEGW congresses again. To this date that pledge has been honored and UEGW takes place every year in the autumn.

UEGF development at this time was driven largely by the need for the UEGW to grow and become established. Significant strains started to emerge. First, a number of European professional societies that were not part of the original seven Founding Member Societies voiced their concerns about UEGF operating as a “closed club” and made a legitimate claim to join UEGF. Secondly, UEGF was governed by a somewhat cumbersome structure that kept all decisions in the hands of representatives from the federated societies. This was making it difficult to control the scientific content and standards of the UEGW, which was then organised each year by a different local committee representing each National Society assigned the organisation of the corresponding UEGW on behalf of UEGF. Thirdly, some voices were raised demanding greater transparency and accountability for UEGF, that had become by then an important and visible organisation.

### Modernisation of UEGF

Therefore, in 1998, UEGF began a reform process to modernise and partially open up the organisation.

The key steps of the reform were:

**Incorporation of Associate Member Societies** via a standardised process involving; formal application by the interested Society; review of credentials by the UEGF Council based on pre-established criteria (professional focus on digestive tract, democratic organisation, financial transparency and independence from commercial interests), eventual approval. Thus, around that time, a substantial group of Associate Member Societies joined the UEGF nucleus: ESGAR (European Society of Gastrointestinal and Abdominal Radiology); EDS (European Digestive Surgery); EAES (European Association for Endoscopic Surgery); ESNM (European Society of Neurogastroenterology and Motility); ESPCG (European Society for Primary Care Gastroenterology); ECCO (European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation); EAC (European Association of Coloproctology); EHPSG (European Helicobacter Pylori Study Group).

By promoting a broader “society-base” for UEGF and, consequently, of the UEGW, the meeting gained scientific breadth and the legitimacy of serving as a forum for the leading European interest groups.

**Establishment of a permanent UEGF Scientific Committee** to control the programme of subsequent UEGW's, thus avoiding the changing and somewhat erratic decisions on scientific direction and content, that inevitably had resulted from “national” scientific committees shaping each successive UEGW. The UEGF Scientific Committee was made up of 1 representative from each Founding Member Society, 2 representatives from the pool of Associate Member Societies and a

number of “independent” experts. There was a transition period (UEGF Rome 1999, Brussels 2000 and Amsterdam 2001) but, beginning with UEGW Geneva 2002, the Scientific Committee assumed total and exclusive control of UEGW programming and abstract selection. The previous local scientific committees were “de facto” abolished.

**Establishment of a Public Affairs Committee** As the Federation grew in maturity and stature it was clear UEGF should develop a public voice for European gastroenterology which so far had been sadly lacking. The Public Affairs Committee was chaired by a member of the UEGF Council. The Committee was composed not only of individuals named by the Federation members because of their interest in participating in public-oriented activities but also non-medical members from industry, lobbying groups and independents. The Public Affairs Committee made its presence and impact felt in subsequent UEGW's and also played an important role by establishing a bidirectional communication channel with European public health officers.

### Further progress

The above measures undoubtedly strengthened UEGF and enhanced its sphere of operation and visibility, as well as increasing the breadth of representation of UEGW. However, some perceived weaknesses and imbalances persisted. First, the process of incorporating Associate Member Societies into UEGF fell a bit short of expectations, because the UEGF Council only approved two representatives from the Associate Member Societies pool to join the Council. Therefore, some Associates expressed dissatisfaction with the model feeling deprived of an appropriate input channel into the UEGF decision making process. Second, as UEGW gained in prestige and recognition, the number of candidates to organise future UEGW's gradually surged and political competition among aspiring





13 UEGF Strategy meeting Ashdown Park April 2007  
Debating the reformation

National Societies became sometimes too bitter. The multitude of applicants also meant that some were rejected year after year, resulting in unfortunate grumbling about bias and personality issues. Moreover, since the Scientific Committee effectively assumed full responsibility for the selection of abstracts and the scientific programme at UEGW, local organisers had been relegated to logistic tasks (that is, arranging for the congress center, hotels, transportation). These were, precisely, the items that industry sponsors represented by the Biomedical Industry Board repeatedly insisted warranted greater financial restraint and control by UEGF.

Therefore, in 2001 UEGF undertook a second process of reform by:

**Assuming direct organisational and financial responsibility for the organisation of UEGW**, abolishing the previous system of National Societies being awarded the prerogative of organising and financing each successive UEGW. The change would be made effective from UEGW 2006 onwards.

**At the same time, through an internal Council election process six congress sites** for UEGW's to be held from 2006 until 2011 were chosen. The selection of these sites was voted on by the UEGF Council after hearing the opinion of the UEGF's own professional congress organiser and receiving input from industries that represented the UEGW's key financial backers. Thus, choosing a future

UEGW site became fundamentally more technical than political.

**Modifying the Council structure by electing a General Secretary** for 4 years effective from January 2002. The General Secretary became a non-voting member of the Council with executive functions within UEGF. This key organisational step freed the General Secretary from the burden and potential bias of at the same time representing a member Society in the UEGF Council. Also, a General Secretariat was to be developed to ensure an appropriate administrative structure to manage the day to day UEGF affairs and all future UEGW's from 2006 onwards and to be headed by an Executive Deputy. Mr. Jaume Boltà was appointed as the first Executive Deputy Secretary.

**Establishing a UEGF Foundation** to facilitate the legal requirements for managing reserve UEGF funds for specific activities and, particularly, contingency funds protecting future UEGW's from unexpected loss of revenue.

**Organising an open contest based on competitive bidding** by reputable Congress Management companies with a transnational European capability. The winner would run successive UEGW's on behalf of UEGF. From 2006 onwards the selected Congress Management Company was charged with the logistical aspects of UEGW organisation whereas the UEGF Secretariat and Council directly controlled UEGW financial affairs.

**Establishment of a UEGF Education Committee.** Following the successful model established by the Scientific and Public Affairs Committee, the UEGF Council in 2004 decided to start an Education Committee to develop a programme which would promote, articulate and finance educational activities in Europe. From its inception it was recognized that the Education

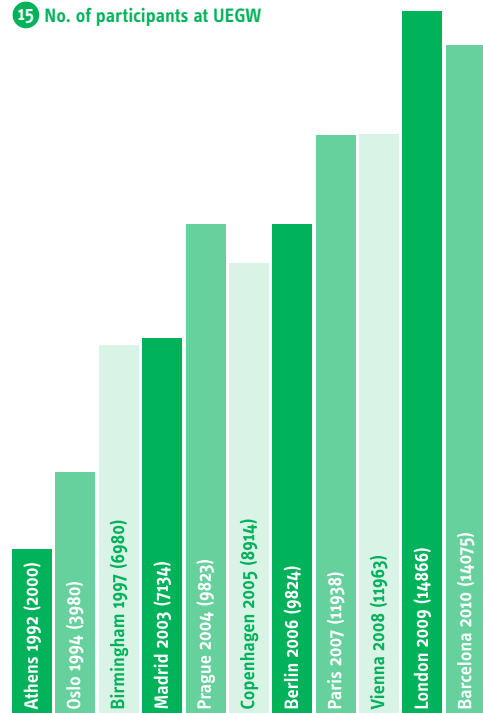


14 General Assembly at UEGW 2008

Committee would face an important, but also delicate task. Many educational activities related to digestive basic and clinical science were already available throughout Europe, promoted by National Societies and other country / language circumscribed groups. At the same time, special-interest pan-European societies such as endoscopy, surgery, liver, paediatrics and others were conducting solid and well established programmes with a transnational outlook. Thus, it was felt that the newly established UEGF Education Committee should collaborate and complement these existing activities rather than compete with them. Societies, interest groups and even individuals may apply for a number of educational grant "calls" announced by UEGF at predetermined times during each year.

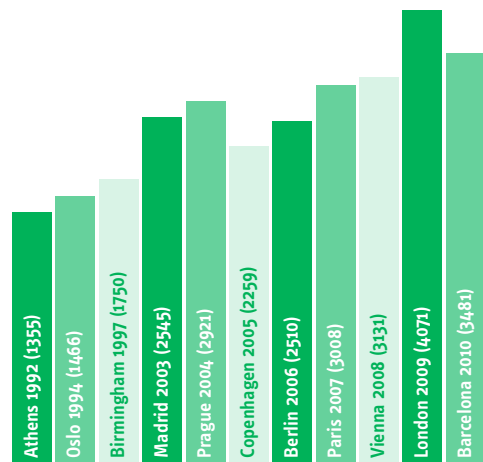
In the years since its inception, UEGW has clearly matured and achieved a considerable reputation in Europe and the rest of the world. Meeting attendees and also those who remain at home, hear about the outcome of each UEGW, define the success of this transnational multi-topic congress in two ways: number of participants and quality of both scientific and educational activities. Based on attendance standards, the UEGWs in Madrid (2003), Prague (2004), Copenhagen-Malmö (2005), London (2009), Barcelona (2010) and Stockholm (2011) were quite an achievement,

15 No. of participants at UEGW



attendees numbering well over 12.000 in some events, which surpassed the most optimistic expectations.

Quality has also been rising steadily over the years, which is apparent in several important aspects: there are virtually no “low level” sessions, speakers are, as a rule, chosen from among top experts on each topic and abstract selection is exclusively based on peer review. UEGW has already become a global meeting since it is attracting a large proportion of non-European participants, both as contributors of scientific presentations and as attendees. Thus, it has advanced beyond its early confines as a continental meeting to achieve world congress status. By comparison with other major meetings established almost a century ago, such as the US annual Digestive Disease Week, UEGW is still a newcomer. However, UEGW is rapidly approaching its counterpart across the Atlantic judged by its ability to attract true premiere reports on ground-breaking transnational science and major clinical studies such as trials, epidemiological assessments, innovative technologies and outcomes research.



16 No. of abstracts at UEGW

The UEGW of today is very different to former years. Scientific calibre is of the highest order and basic sciences are well represented. UEGW attracts and nurtures basic science experts but mostly of the kind that sustains and is indispensable to translational research. In a purely educational dimension, both doctors in practice and research-oriented gastroenterologists need to be updated in relevant discoveries in the fundamental sciences. Ethics at UEGW has been assigned the highest priority and special efforts are made to prevent any kind of commercial, lobbying or other undue influence on materials presented at the meeting. Furthermore, UEGW is also bringing to the public challenging debates on uncomfortable issues that we feel should not be hidden but rather openly



17 UEGW Vienna 2008  
Plenary Session

discussed. Indeed, UEGF, can be legitimately proud that its most public face provides honest service to the science and practice of gastroenterology.

UEGF now fulfils all of its founding statutes. In addition to a world class annual meeting it has developed successful programmes in the fields of education and public health which are described in subsequent chapters. It has developed an efficient central secretariat housed in its own handsome building in central downtown Vienna right in the heart of Europe “The House of European Gastroenterology”. Future development has started with providing UEGF with a modern up to the minute image and brand to match the structural changes of the last few years.

The House of European Gastroenterology is set to become the home for all our members who work to develop Gastroenterology in Europe and together with a planned Journal raises the visibility of United European Gastroenterology even higher.



## UEGF Scientific Committee: Revolution, devolution and evolution!



**Michael Farthing**  
UEGF President-Elect 2012-2014  
Chair, Scientific Committee 2004-2009  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Sussex

The UEGF Scientific Committee was formally established in 2001 and its first task was to deliver the programme for United European Gastroenterology Week (UEGW) Geneva in 2002. The decision to establish a centralised UEGF Scientific Committee, responsible to the UEGF Council, was aimed at improving consistency of structure and quality to the UEGW programme. The UEGF meetings prior to Geneva, from Athens in 1992 to Amsterdam in 2001, were planned by the local organising committee, usually overseen by the respective national society. This inevitably led to variations in the structure of the meeting and the relative emphasis placed on clinical practice and research. Another reason to establish a UEGF Scientific Committee was the desire to engage the specialist member societies more deeply in the development of the programme.

Christoph Beglinger was the first Chair of the Scientific Committee, which met for the first time in Zurich Airport in January 2000. The second meeting followed in September of that year and was organised by Louis Akkermans, a member of the Committee, in the outskirts of

Amsterdam. Preparations for the Amsterdam 2001 meeting were already in progress under the leadership of Guido Tytgat, although this of course was being organised under the old system. Apparently, at the first meeting of the local committee, Guido presented a draft programme, which he had skilfully but single-handedly put together and the only input required from his local committee was to suggest the names of some speakers!

Under Christoph's leadership the new Committee functioned in a very different way, with representation from all of the member societies, using their specialist expertise to develop the programme. Although the Committee was working extremely well, Christoph created an outstanding opportunity to get the Committee to bond together with a view to even better collaborative working. In March of 2001 he organised the now famous meeting of the Committee in Crans-Montana. In addition to completing our work on the programme, we were able to enjoy a few hours of skiing in the magnificent Swiss Alps. Inevitably, there was a diversity of ability of Committee members in dealing with the Swiss mountains. I went up the mountain in a télécabine with Erik Schruppf, Joachim Mössner and Chris Hawkey. On leaving the télécabine Schruppf and Mössner rapidly put on their skis and departed down the mountain at great speed. I was about to follow at a more modest pace when I saw Chris Hawkey walking back to the télécabine apparently to make his descent, explaining loudly that there was no way he was "going down that bloody mountain on skis"!

Geneva was a great success, and Christoph went on to organise the scientific programmes for Madrid in 2003 and Prague in 2004. The numbers of participants and abstract submissions were beginning to rise sharply at this time, clearly indicating that UEGW was becoming a force to reckon with. I had



**18 UEGF Scientific Committee 2008**

served on the Committee between 2000 and 2003 as the representative from EAGE, and then in 2004 was invited to re-join the Committee as Chair-elect running in alongside Christoph Beglinger as he prepared for the Prague meeting and I began to develop the programme for Copenhagen in 2005. By now, the Scientific Committee was a mature, well-established body, working in an increasingly devolved way.

The Committee would have its first planning meeting in March, when each of the sub-groups (Upper gastrointestinal disorders, lower gastrointestinal disorders, liver, surgery, endoscopy and pancreas) would bring forward ideas for clinical and basic science symposia. Christoph Beglinger, by then, had established a template for the meeting which continued to evolve year by year but has formed the basis for the size

and shape of all UEGWs during the past ten years. The programme would then continue to be refined by email correspondence and a pre-final draft programme confirmed later in the year at UEGW. The programme was finalised in the December meeting, speakers were confirmed and invitations sent out the following January. The final meeting took place in June in the year of the meeting and the prime task on this occasion was for the Committee to select abstracts for oral or poster presentation and to assemble these into sessions which would become the "original" component of the three day programme. From 2006 onwards, participant numbers in UEGW and abstract submissions continued to increase. It became very clear that UEGW was not just a regional meeting but was becoming an important international meeting with participants and presenters coming from all of the other continents.

The London meeting in 2009 was a joint meeting with the World Gastroenterology Organisation and OMGE. It was agreed that the usual framework for UEGW should be adopted and that the Scientific Committee would continue to work in the normal way, with additional input from the other partner organisations. The complexity increased but it was generally felt that the outcome was a success.

### The Postgraduate Course

From 2006 onwards, we made an important change in the way in which postgraduate courses were delivered during the weekend prior to UEGW. Previously, the member societies had the opportunity to organise their own postgraduate course. These varied in duration from 1-2 days and ran concurrently prior to the main programme. The European Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ESGE), the European Association for Gastroenterology and Endoscopy (EAGE) European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) routinely ran a course, as did ESPGHAN. Many on the Committee were aware of the highly successful postgraduate course at the Digestive Diseases Week in the US. We thought that UEGW would benefit by moving towards a fully integrated post graduate programme. Eventually it was agreed to take this forward and it became clear, even after the first programme in Paris, that we had found a formula that would be successful. Total numbers attending the course have grown from 800 in 2007 to 2000 in 2011.

### Further Evolution

In 2009, John Atherton, an independent member of the Scientific Committee for several years, was elected as the next Chair and has now overseen two very successful meetings in Barcelona and Stockholm. A major recent emphasis has been on improving the original research presented at the meeting, and the UEGW has at last become the event at which Europeans, and many other researchers,

present their most important new findings. As well as the 100,00 Euro prize for the best European researcher, the Scientific Committee offers five 10,000 Euro prizes for the best abstract submissions; oral free paper sessions are more interactive, higher profile, and better attended; posters have more room and more Faculty visitors; and new innovations such as video posters have proven popular. Another emphasis has been on promoting basic and translational science. The "Today's science; tomorrow's medicine" series has proven particularly popular: two day top international focused meetings within the UEGW, the first on Stem Cells, the second on Bacteria in Chronic Disease, and this year's on Obesity, Inflammation and Carcinogenesis. The Scientific Committee has promoted internationalisation, with "East meets West" symposia and joint European-Japanese endoscopy symposia. A final initiative has been to attract more young delegates. Innovations here have included a National Scholar programme; travel grants, reduced price registration for all young participants; keypad voting; the ability to ask speakers questions by text messaging; access to the programme via smart phones; two days of live endoscopy; a Young People's Party; and for the very young, a crèche!

The change that took place in 2002 in which the Geneva meeting was planned by a UEGF Scientific Committee through the development of a standard template which was to inform all future meetings, could be considered a revolution. It was clear that the demise of the local organising committee played a major part in transforming UEGW as we know it today. This quiet revolution enabled Federation members to play a more active role in the development of the programme with clear devolution of responsibilities but, at the same time, with changing Chairs and refreshment on a regular basis of Committee membership, has allowed UEGW to evolve into what it is today.

## UEGF Education Committee: Blending science and practice

The initial Chairman of the Education Committee, Peter Malfertheimer, realised that setting up a European Education programme would be a very delicate task especially as there were many such activities already being undertaken by members of the Federation. The sub-specialist societies such as endoscopy, surgery, liver, paediatrics and others were conducting solid and well established programmes with a pan-European outlook. It was soon clear that the UEGF Education Committee should collaborate and complement these existing activities rather than compete with them and it was left to the next highly active chairman, Lars Lundell, to develop the UEGF educational activities to reflect the federation's intention to promote education of physicians and scientists in the fields of gastroenterology, hepatology and related disciplines, to enlarge the number of European training projects and to harmonise professional education throughout Europe. All of this in the spirit of collaboration and complementation of existing society programmes.

The UEGF Education Committee has established several successful programme formats of its own, which focus on varying subspecialties from both scientific and clinical perspectives.

### UEGF Trainee Courses

UEGF Trainee Courses are directed towards junior faculty and trainees and present a mixture of thought-provoking lectures and practical skill training. The sessions cover the latest science and clinical information, including diagnostic and treatment issues, and expose participants to real-life situations.

The fourth of UEGF's Professional Trainee Courses was held this year in Stockholm, Sweden on Obesity, Metabolic Syndrome and the Gastro-Intestinal Tract at the Citykonferensen Ingenjörshuset on February 2-4, 2012.



**19 Peter Malfertheimer**  
First Chair Education Committee



**20 Lars Lundell**  
Second Chair Education Committee



### UEGF Basic Science Workshops

The intention of the UEGF Basic Science Workshops is to create a platform for personal and scientific exchange between young investigators and distinguished representatives from established European research institutions. This year's course on epithelial ion transport will bring together experts of the field to summarize recent advances in the gastrointestinal tract and liver. A distinguished faculty of GI experts will lead discussions on the wide range of research possibilities. It is intended that this meeting will be the starting point for a European-wide network to stimulate professional careers and give young researchers a durable platform on the international stage as well as excellent opportunities to network.

### UEGF Training Support

The UEGF Training Support programme provides for long term partnerships of up to three years duration with particularly promising educational activities of member societies or other professional groups. Up to €500,000 will be distributed to innovative programmes and high quality proposals from UEGF member societies in the coming year.

### TIGER

TIGER (Training Innovation in Gastroenterology and Educational Resources). In May 2010 at a meeting held at the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Starnberg, Germany a five year action plan for the UEGF Education Committee was developed; The most important outcomes of the meeting were the need to implement Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) and to develop EBM teaching and training activities within UEGF and to develop an Online Learning in Gastroenterology facility.

### OLGa

UEGF is proud of having achieved to establish an e-platform, which is the new leader in medical web based education in our field across the world. UEGF's online learning portal OLGa (Online Learning in Gastroenterology) delivers state-of-the-art educational material in the field of gastroenterology created by gastroenterology specialists across Europe and beyond using e-Media, an e-Library and e-Courses – from an online web-based multimedia archive built up from material gathered at UEGWs and from Member Societies meetings archives and courses.



21 OLGa Taskforce 2010

### EBG-UEGF CME Evaluation Committee CME for European Gastroenterology

The United European Gastroenterology Federation (UEGF) the UEMS Section of Gastroenterology and the UEMS European Board of Gastroenterology (EBG) collaborate in the EACCME (European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education) accreditation process to provide accreditation for any educational activity in gastroenterology in Europe by any professional organisation.



22 UEGF Trainee Course 2009



23 The TIGER's 2010



24 UEGF Basic Science Workshop July 2011

## UEGF Public Affairs Committee: Public understanding & political awareness

30% of the European population are affected by a gastroenterological disease at least once during their lifetime. Despite this, the topic of gastroenterology has not yet become a priority on the European health agenda. As a consequence in 2000 the UEGF Public Affairs Committee was born with Michael Keighley as its first Chairman and a mandate to promote gastroenterology at a public and political level. To make the general public aware of the area and most importantly the decision makers not only in Brussels, but also the politicians in each European country. Promotion of research, early diagnosis and treatment of gastroenterological diseases was to be at the top of the UEGF Public Affairs Committee agenda, and would therefore contribute to the development of an effective health policy for the citizens of Europe.



25 Reinhold Stockbrugger  
Chair Public Affairs Committee

The 5km race regularly attracts several hundred athletic gastroenterologists. The entry fees are donated to varying health care organisations.

In collaboration with patient organisations, UEGF PAC organises public information events, which take place during UEGW. Focussing on a particular condition, each event provides an ideal forum for discussion among patients and world-renowned experts. UEGF PAC has cooperated with the following patient organisations: Coelicac UK, The GUT Trust, The National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease (NACC), Crohns and Colitis (IBD) Research, EFCCA, Foro Español de Pacientes, Mag-och tarm forbundet.

### The Political agenda

Close contact with politicians and opinion leaders in Brussels is vital in order to put the patients' needs on top of the European policy agenda. To enforce these endeavours, UEGF PAC entered into active networking with EU decision makers by enlisting a professional public affairs agency in Brussels, eacon, a well known and connected European Affairs Consulting Group. In order to strengthen its

### The Public agenda

Under successive Chairmen Colm O'Morain (2006-09 and Reinhold Stockbrugger (2010-13) the following strategy was developed to achieve its mandate to reach the general public as well as specialised audiences and decision makers. The UEGF Public Affairs Committee (PAC) through press releases, press conferences and personal contacts with key journalists maintains media relations on a professional basis. A bi-weekly service provided by the UEGF PAC to the UEGF members, the so-called "UEGF EU News", provides the latest information concerning gastroenterology directly from the centres of political power in Brussels. At the annual UEGW, a daily newspaper, the "Daily Congress News" highlights information about the congress and UEGF affairs. It also features interviews with medical experts, UEGF representatives and patient organisations. UEGF PAC also organises two events during the annual UEGW: the Charity Run and an annual Public Health Day. The Charity Run has already become a traditional part of UEGW and a popular charity event.



26 UEGW Barcelona Charity Run 2010

ties with non-European sister associations, UEGF runs a number of collaborations and exchange programmes. Particular attention is paid to our colleagues in North America and the Asian-Pacific region.

### Colorectal cancer

In Europe and with the EU in particular UEGF has highlighted the morbidity and indeed mortality of gastrointestinal disease. The second most common cancer in Europe is colorectal cancer with more than 200,000 patients dying annually of this disease. As a consequence the UEGF PAC has campaigned since its inception for awareness of this potentially lethal condition. Their efforts finally came to fruition in 2010. On September 20, 2010, a Written Declaration was launched in the European Parliament in Strasbourg to raise the awareness for Colorectal Cancer among EU officials and to fight against this

fatal disease in Europe. Together with the support of UEGF experts in the field, MEP Pavel Poc (Czech Republic, Socialists & Democrats) and 4 colleague co-signatories from all political groups, amongst them the Chair of the Health Committee in the European Parliament Jo Leinen (Socialists & Democrats) and former Slovenian Prime Minister Alojz Peterle (European People's Party) collected the required number of signatures from Members of Parliament to have the Written Declaration adopted and presented to the EU Member States and the European Commission.



27 Signatures for the written declaration September 2010

**The Written Declaration N°68/2010 was signed by 411 MEPs and was finally adopted by the European Parliament on November 25th, 2010.**

In its fight against colorectal cancer UEGF PAC undertook a number of other actions including:

- The Barcelona Declaration – Improve the early detection and the management of Europeans with familial colorectal cancer.
- European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Colorectal Cancer Screening and Diagnosis:
  - An article in the European Journal of Gastroenterology & Hepatology: “European Initiatives in colorectal cancer screening”
  - A round-table debate on the European Colorectal Cancer policy
  - UEGF endorses Colorectal Cancer Patient Conference in Barcelona

## UEGF Future Trends Committee: Scanning the horizon

The youngest UEGF Committee started work in 2010 chaired by the President Rolf Hultcrantz for the first two years but from 2012 onwards would be chaired by the President-elect. Currently it is under the chairmanship of Michael Farthing (2012-2013). It includes representation of all UEGF members and experts (medical and non medical) from outside the community and has been set up to identify and characterise important emerging trends in research and clinical practice and scientific-technological developments in medical and surgical gastroenterology and hepatology. These trends may be economic, demographic, practise-based, scientific/technological or political in nature. The Future Trends Committee’s purpose is to assess the impact these developments will have on the Federation and its members, patients, physicians and nurses in the upcoming years and to advise the UEGF decision makers on steps to be taken. Two projects will be tackled in a biennial cycle which will focus on changes in health care, GI learning needs and methods, drug developments as well as developments in techniques used in GI health care. Executive summaries of the Committee’s assessments and recommendations will be published. The first two of these projects has been “Current and Future trends in the Prevention and treatment of Colorectal Cancer” and a “Whitebook of Gastroenterology”, a position paper on the state of gastrointestinal disease in Europe.



28 Rolf Hultcrantz  
First Chair Future Trends Committee



## UEGF Secretariat: Professional administration and financing

**Katharina Buder** *UEGF Secretariat*

**Peter Milla** *UEGF Treasurer 2003-2011*

Emeritus Professor of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition, UCL Institute of Child Health, University College London.

**The art of managing a volunteer-governed organisation is a special one and the involvement of the UEGF Headquarter Secretariat together with its finances have played a major role in UEGF's rapid and successful growth in recent years.**

### Studio EGA

In the early days UEGF was supported by the University and Hospital Departments of the Federation's officers and the Italian Professional Conference Organiser Studio EGA. Cristina Aru and her team provided the young federation with the professional organisation of the necessary for successful UEGWs including Venue planning, Housing and Exhibition Management as well as secretarial support for council meetings.



29 UEGW Rome Studio EGA crew 1999

### Barcelona Secretariat

However it soon became clear that as the activities of the UEGF outside of the UEGW began to grow and Juan-R. Malagelada as Secretary General instituted a number of processes of reform aimed at opening up the Federation to new members and it becoming

more transparent to the outside world. The organisational support in 2001 was no longer adequate and the first moves were made to establish a more professional administrative structure. In 2004 Jaumè Bolta became the Federation's dedicated administrator to ensure that the Federation's business ran smoothly. At this time support for the UEGF committees was spread all over Europe and was totally dependent on the Committee Chair's hospital or university department. The annual UEGW was organised by the national society of the host country with the help of a local PCO as well as Studio Ega, the UEGF core PCO. It was clear by now that further changes would be necessary.

### Vienna – vereint

In 2003 Peter Ferenci was elected as Chair of the Scientific Committee and he appointed the Vienna based Association Management Company Vereint to take over the management of the Scientific Committee. This was followed a year later by Council appointing vereint to manage the Public Affairs Committee. This was also the time when Doris Möstl appeared on the scene, her task being to manage these UEGF committees. In 2006, when Christoph Beglinger became General Secretary some further structural changes occurred as he saw the necessity of completely centralising the Secretariat. UEGF was then entirely serviced administratively by vereint and Doris Möstl assumed the position of UEGF's Executive Director. This was the first time that UEGF had a Headquarter Secretariat.

### Vienna – medadvice

Doris Möstl left vereint in late 2008 with the split from vereint and with the support of UEGF founded her own company, medadvice – Association Management. At this time UEGF was the sole client and the Headquarter Secretariat moved to the "skyline office" in the Vienna Twin Towers at the Southern outskirts of the Austrian Capital which was not entirely

to the liking of some of the Executive Officers who had grown to like the Viennese character of the inner-city district of Vienna. Initially, just four people managed the everyday activities of the association alongside Doris as Executive Director: Julia Frauscher, Wilma Hofer and Verena Marlovits.



30 Meeting rooms in The House of European Gastroenterology 2012

Since then just as the activities of the Federation have increased significantly so have the activities of the Secretariat. Formerly the main function of the paid staff was to organise the annual UEGW together with CPO Hanser Service, UEGF's core PCO. Today the portfolio of tasks has grown considerably and now in addition to the organisation of the meeting the UEGF Secretariat manages and serves the four governing boards (Executive Committee, Council, General Assembly and National Societies Forum) the Scientific, Education, Public Affairs, Future Trends, National Societies Committee and all of the activities that the committees promote which have been previously detailed. The committees' activities form a major part of the Secretariats workload, with Trainee Courses, Evidence Based Medicine Workshops, Young Investigator Meetings, running a unique online library and e-learning portal together with interaction with our PR Agency impressum and EU Affairs Agency eacon.

Following the recent dissolution of ASNEMGE, UEGF's membership has now grown from 16 to 56 Member Societies which leads to an increase in membership administration and communication. New marketing channels such as website, e-marketing and social media platforms have opened up a window of opportunities that are constantly explored by the UEGF Secretariat.

### Vienna – The House of European Gastroenterology (HEG)

The most recent milestone in the history of the UEGF Headquarter Secretariat has been the establishment of the House of European Gastroenterology – finally UEGF has its own home and can offer to the European gastroenterological community a meeting point and communication hub. The HEG is situated in the heart of Vienna, near the City Hall in a 19th century building. Its unique charm is its combination of typically Viennese historic feel with a state-of-the-art modern adaption and interior design providing UEGF with space for office facilities for the Secretariat and ample meeting rooms of nearly 400 square metres.



31 UEGF The House of European Gastroenterology 2012





32 UEGF Secretariat 2012

Together with the volunteer leadership, the medadvice team is the face and the heart of the House of European Gastroenterology and look forward to a bright future for UEGF in their new home. The team has in the meantime grown to 13 people. The House is sometimes referred to as the “dolls’ house” for obvious reasons but slowly the female dominance is decreasing and gender balance asserting itself with two male colleagues now supporting the team. The current team in alphabetical order is:

**Sorika Berner-Alteneeder, Katharina Buder, Wilma Hofer, Christian Ferner, Julia Frauscher, Julia Kasper, Annemarie Leonhartsberger, Verena Marlovits, Doris Möstl, Mike Papuga, Anna Sowa, Tina Waclawek, Maresa Wiener**

Financial development

From its inception finances were always problematic in the early days and the present solid financial foundation beyond the wildest dreams of the council of the day. Despite the success of the First Treasurer Alberto Montori in gaining the financial support of industry, a fundamental flaw in the funding model used where the Federation had little or no control of the only funding stream and a distinct lack of financial stringency in expenditure inevitably led to slow growth. The growth of UEGF’s equity from just under € 1 Mio over ten fold to €10-12 Mio in the last ten years has undoubtedly arisen from taking over the organisation of the UEGW from a host national society together with more stringent financial control.



33 Development of UEGF equity 2005-2010

Development of UEGF equity 2005-2010

On UEGF taking over organising the UEGW the new Treasurer Peter Milla(2004-2011) introduced business planning involving the whole UEGF Council, complete transparency of accounts and budget setting for each UEGF activity. This has resulted in not only the Executive Officers but also the rest of Council being aware of the cost of activities with consequently more realistic future planning. However, taking over running the UEGW meant a lot more financial responsibility for the Treasurer than just paying the bills and inevitably meant that like the Secretary-General he would require professional support from a number of sources in addition to the Secretariat including auditors, bankers and tax lawyers. The Secretariat would have to become involved in bookkeeping and general

accounting, the supervision of cash flow management and ensuring that accounts were closed at the year-end in a timely manner for the annual audit. Excellent collaboration between the Treasurer and the Secretariat in all of these matters together with the planning and controlling of budgets, tax issues and legal matters has resulted in the happy situation of today.

UEGF has grown into a multi-million euro business whose financial task is to raise sufficient funds to ensure that the Federation can carry out its aims of ensuring the digestive health of the citizens of Europe and the growth of the discipline and profession of gastroenterology in Europe. As a consequence a situation arises that seems at first sight to be paradoxical: for the Federation to be



34 UEGF Finance team 2006-2012

successful in realising these aims expressed in its statutes it has at the same time to be both a profit making concern and a not-for-profit organisation; a delicate balance that the Treasurer and Secretariat contrive each year to successfully achieve. The robustness of the financial systems in place together with prudent management has allowed the Federation to weather the global economic crisis without a major downturn in its activities. In addition, the development of sufficient funds allowed a complete overhaul of the financial interaction of the member societies with the Federation. The Federation was able to move away from a “shareout” of the profits (Ponza formula) to an activity driven model supporting the member societies in common goals as has been described in the activities of the different committees.

This resulted in a much more cohesive Federation. The divisiveness of the Ponza formula was finally removed. This period of time has seen a major increase in the Federation’s activities outside of the UEGW as well as further safeguarding of UEGF’s financial viability. From a position of such strength the Federation has been able to start putting into place long term solutions for additional streams of funding with an online learning portal and at long last, real steps have been made to establish the Federation’s own Journal and with it subscribed individual membership.

## UEGF National Societies: Synergies and collaboration



35 Gestation of the National Societies Forum at the ASNEMGE Presidential Reception 2007

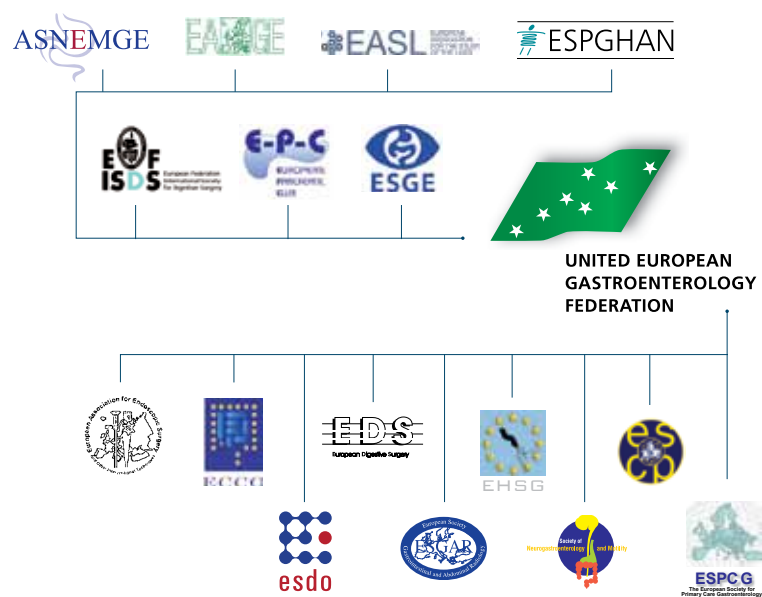
### National Society Committee 41 societies previously members of ASNEMGE

**Mark Hull** *Chair National Societies Committee 2011-  
Professor of Medicine Leeds Institute of Mol. Medicine  
University of Leeds*

The newest member organisations in UEGF are the National Societies of Gastroenterology. Until 2011, the National Societies were represented in UEGF by the Association des Sociétés Nationales Européennes et Méditerranéennes de Gastroentérologie (ASNEMGE), also known as the Association of National European and Mediterranean Societies of Gastroenterology (1947-2011), which was a Founding member of UEGF. Transfer of National Society representation in UEGF to the National Societies Committee has undoubtedly improved National representation

in UEGF, with the clear advantage of greater UEGF benefits for all the 41 National Societies, which are currently members. In the coming years, a stronger National and regional voice in UEGF has great potential for increasing communication between members across Europe and beyond.

## The Members of UEGF



### 36 UEGF Members Societies 2011

The UEGF is nothing without its member societies. In this chapter brief thumbnail sketches are provided by each Founding Member and each Associate Member, together with their view of their interaction over the last 20 years with UEGF.

#### Founding Members:

**ASNEMGE**  
*Association of National European and Mediterranean Societies of Gastroenterology*  
ASNEMGE was formed in 1947 out of the prewar Societe Internationale de Gastroenterologie. Its principal aim was to provide a forum for like-minded gastroenterologists from around Europe and the Mediterranean basin, to meet and exchange clinical and scientific ideas and to

consolidate friendship and fellowship amongst its members. Each National Society from these countries formed the membership of the association. In October 2011 ASNEMGE was dissolved and integrated into the federative structure of UEGF by installing a National Societies Forum and a National Societies Committee

**EAGEN**  
*European Association for Gastroenterology, Endoscopy and Nutrition*

**EASL**  
*European Association for the Study of the Liver*  
The European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) has grown from a small organisation, with 70 participants at its first meeting, to becoming the leading liver

association in Europe. The association is a renowned society of clinicians and scientists striving to promote liver research and improve the treatment of liver disease worldwide. EASL attracts the foremost hepatology experts as members and every year hosts the International Liver Congress™ gathering in excess of 8000 hepatologists and medical experts. EASL has an impressive track record in promoting research in liver disease, supporting wider education, and promoting changes in European liver policy.

EASL is one of the UEGF Founding members and is present within the diverse Boards and Committees of the Federation. The collaborative actions that EASL has accomplished with UEGF throughout the years have resulted in diverse educational activities in Europe; UEGF-EASL Professional Trainee Course on Cholestatic Liver Disease (Oxford, UK, 2010) and the Inter Society Activity Course (ISAC) on Interventions in Liver Disease (Paris, France, 2012). EASL members also play an integral part of the Liver Postgraduate Teaching programme at UEGW year after year.

**EFISDS**  
*International Society of Digestive Surgery (European Federation)*

The EFISDS has been involved with the concept and establishment of the UEGF from the very outset in 1990, when Professor Vincenzo Speranza, ISDS President at that stage, commenced discussions with prominent European gastroenterologists in Rome about the formation of such Federation.

In 1992 the EFISDS was part of the final formation of the UEGF and as one of the Seven Sisters, the only surgical society, involved as a founding member ever since. The EFISDS has been deeply committed to the activities of the UEGF and its role has been always recognized. Two of the UEGF Presidents in fact were executive EFISDS Councillors, Professors

Vincenzo Speranza and Professor Edward Farthmann. As its stands, now 20 years on, the activities within the UEGF have been an important and prominent aspect of the topical landscape of the EFISDS activities. The EFISDS has enjoyed being part of the annual UEGW and participation in the various councils to represent the surgical aspects within the UEGF. In addition EFISDS members have had the benefit from various UEGF grants for educational projects such as PG Courses and Professional Training courses. Whilst taking a keen interest in all activities within the UEGF, the EFISDS prides itself on quiet performance and progress ensuring that energies contributed by its members are directed only towards its vision of always challenging and improving the standard.

The EFISDS was officially launched as an initiative by the ISDS in 1990 to set up regional Federations all over the world in order to improve communications and optimize efforts in surgical training and education. As a result the EFISDS was formed and formally registered in the Netherlands. The EFISDS has a focus on delivering quality training and education, mentoring and peer support through the most intelligent methodology with latest digitally technologies available. Some of the recent activities involve annual PG Courses monothematic professional training initiatives, surgical tutorials including real time collaboration and the official support and endorsement of the Laparoscopic Surgical Skills accreditation as rolled out by the LSS Foundation. The EFISDS recognizes the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to digestive surgery with the ultimate aim of providing their members with the best possible materials required for best practice patient care.



## EPC

### *European Pancreatic Club*

The European Pancreatic Club (EPC) was founded during a symposium on December 9 and 10, 1965 in London. The idea was to bring basic scientists and clinicians together in an informal atmosphere to promote friendship and communication on pancreatic research. Since 1965 the EPC became a standing research organisation which co-organised annual meetings together with the respective EPC Presidents in different venues in Europe. The presidency is taken over by a clinician followed by a basic scientist in the following year. Within the annual meetings one of the main focuses is to promote young pancreatologists and to unite Europe in the organisation of multicentre trials. For this purpose since 1991 the “Young Researchers” Corner” has been included in the main programme. This event, given by international experts is especially designed to present information on new techniques and skills of pancreatic research. In recent years the support for young researchers developed further with the introduction of attractive travel grants, prizes for best clinical and basic presentations, the establishment of the EPC-Fellowship and the support of the “Pancreas 2000” project. Regarding international studies, the European Study Group of Pancreatic Cancer (ESPAC) and the European Registry of Hereditary Pancreatitis and Familial Pancreatic Cancer (EUROPAC) are successfully affiliated within the EPC. Since 2001 “Pancreatology” has been the official journal of the EPC.

In 1992 new statutes were introduced and the EPC became a founding member of the United European Gastroenterology Federation (UEGF) and still plays a role in the United European Gastroenterology Week (UEGW). Here the EPC is actively involved in the organisation of pancreatic sessions within the main meeting and especially in the important postgraduate courses. The UEGF and the EPC

share a common good in supporting and promoting education of young scientists and clinicians. Here, with the support of the UEGF, the EPC has regularly organised additional postgraduate courses at the annual EPC meetings and will continue this collaboration in the future. Furthermore, the 5th course of the “Pancreas 2000” project was generously supported by the UEGF and with this had a great impact on its tremendous success. Commenting of the last 20 years of interaction with the UEGF, it is obvious that the EPC together with its strong supporting partner was able to achieve its main goal in promoting friendship and communication in pancreatic research and is therefore looking forward for future successful UEGF/EPC collaborations.

## ESGE

### *European Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy*

The European Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ESGE) represents 49 national societies of endoscopy in Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa with one society from each of these countries eligible for membership. Our mission is to promote high quality endoscopy and training for endoscopists in Europe and beyond and in 2014 we will proudly celebrate our 50th anniversary. Since its founding in Brussels in 1964 the ESGE has steadily grown stronger and more active. We sponsor and contribute to numerous workshops and postgraduate programmes mainly in Europe and the Middle East but often further afield we also support educational grant programmes for young endoscopists. Through the work of our guidelines, education and research committees, we make a major contribution to endoscopic innovation, quality and safety to ensure that our patients receive the best service that Europe can offer. Our major annual meeting is held during the United European Gastroenterology Week (UEGW) so that all doctors with an interest in endoscopic diagnosis and therapy have the opportunity

to learn new techniques and improve their practice. Many endoscopists from all over the world attend and contribute to the meeting. The ESGE president is elected by the General Assembly of Member Societies. A historic landmark was set at the 14th United European Gastroenterology Week 2006 in Berlin at which the General Assembly endorsed individual membership. The journal *Endoscopy* is the official organ of the ESGE.

ESGE is proud to be one of the founding societies of the UEGF and to have participated in establishing a strong and ambitious platform for promoting good medical practice across national borders. Traditionally the ESGE is the key organiser of the endoscopic content of the UEGW contributing to the scientific committee that is responsible for the whole programme. ESGE specifically organises the live demonstrations and the annual ESGE Learning Area which focuses on different methods of interactive teaching. A major joint project with the UEGF has been the online teaching encyclopaedia which broadcasts via OLGa expert knowledge and training to medical experts all over the world. ESGE has also taken advantage of the UEGF initiative to support member societies through educational grants. In May 2012 a UEGF endorsed event will take place in Berlin with the theme “colonoscopy and colonic neoplasms” as part of the recently launched ESGE Quality in Endoscopy symposia series. Over the course of the past two decades both associations have grown together and have succeeded in their goal to promote high quality medical practice in the field of digestive diseases.

## ESPGHAN

### *European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition*

The European Society of Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition is an international scientific society based in Europe and founded in 1968. Over 650

paediatric gastroenterologists, hepatologists and nutritionists, as well as scientists in relevant fields, are members of the society. ESPGHAN has promoted, since its inception, medical and scientific knowledge in the fields of paediatric gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition. The society promotes scientific exchange among research groups in Europe and among trainees, young doctors and scientists working in paediatric gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition by means of summer schools, research forums and workshops. Annual scientific meetings have taken place in Europe (including Eastern Europe) for the last 30 years, and latterly joint meetings with the North American Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) have met in the USA and in Europe. ESPGHAN has taken an active part in the United European Gastroenterology Federation (UEGF) and in its meetings, and in the Federation of International Societies of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (FISPGHAN) and the World Congresses of Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition. Many guidelines and working group reports have been produced by committees of ESPGHAN to standardise the management of children in Europe and to give competent advice to doctors in Europe on the treatment of gastrointestinal diseases of children. In addition ESPGHAN's expertise is sought by WHO, Codex Alimentarius, the EU, EAP and EMA.

ESPGHAN is one of the seven founding sisters of the UEGF and played an important role in the development of the UEGF. ESPGHAN is the only paediatric member association and, during the 20 years that have followed since its inception, the relationship between the two organisations has matured. Knowledge exchange and networking between paediatric and adult gastroenterologists has become a more vital activity due to the enhanced understanding of gastrointestinal infections,



the impact of nutrient deficiencies and chronic diseases such as coeliac disease, IBD and metabolic diseases linked with obesity. The challenges of transition from child to adult are complex and therefore the joint works of ESPGHAN and UEGF are important today and will continue to be so in years to come. Direct exchange between the two organisations has developed during the last 20 years with ESPGHAN members being invited to present at UEGW and UEGF members taking part in ESPGHAN Annual Meetings, ensuring an important translation of basic science and exchange of clinical expertise in the treatment of gastrointestinal related disease. Today ESPGHAN is involved in numerous UEGF initiatives, with representation in the Scientific, Education and Future Trends Committee and the General Assembly.

#### Associate members:

##### EAES

##### *European Association for Endoscopic Surgery*

The European Association for Endoscopic Surgery (EAES) was founded in 1990. The mission of the Association is to organise annual High Quality congresses in various European countries, to stimulate research, technology development, training as well as publications in minimal invasive surgical and allied endoscopic techniques. The Executive Committee, headed by our current president Karl Fuchs, meets three times a year and the daily board is in constant communication. Several working committees (Education and training, Research, Technology, Publication) are the backbone of the Association's other accomplishments. Consensus Conferences are the fruit of hard work from selected members, and are published as guideline statements in the Association's official organ, "Surgical Endoscopy". This journal, founded in 1990, has grown continually and rapidly over the years under the European leadership of Sir Alfred Cuschieri, along with co-editors from

the United States. The Educational Committee runs EAES training courses and endorses other training courses in member institutions and hospitals not only in continental Europe but also in neighboring countries around the Mediterranean basin and in the Middle East. The Technology Committee holds biannual meetings open to the public, where cutting edge technology is presented. EuroNotes, a joint venture of the EAES in collaboration with the European Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ESGE), focuses on all activities regarding Natural Orifice Translumenal Endoscopic Surgery (NOTES) including a yearly meeting, workshops throughout Europe and runs a European Registry.

The EAES has participated in the UEGW congresses ever since Professor Alberto Montori, in 1999, then president of the EAES, set up the conditions of cooperation between the EAES and UEGF as an associate member. . The European Surgical Society for the Alimentary Tract (ESSAT) was founded during UEGW 2007 and first headed by Christos Dervenis from the European Digestive Surgery group; the bylaws were created and ratified in 2009, Amsterdam. The ESSAT is now headed by Abe Fingerhut, past president of the EAES.

##### ECCO

##### *European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation*

The European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation (ECCO), founded in 2001 to improve the care of patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) in Europe, is now the largest forum for specialists in IBD in the world. It is a non-profit making association, involving 31 member states of the EU and facilitating collaborations beyond Europe's borders. ECCO today represents over 1750 IBD experts as individual members and attracted over 4200 delegates to its annual Congress in 2012. ECCO's mission is to improve the care of patients with IBD in all its aspects through international guidelines for practice, education, research and collaboration

in the area of IBD. The ethos of ECCO (sometimes called the ECCO spirit) is founded on people working for the organisation, on behalf of their country and their patients, rather than seeking a personal profile. As a consequence, ECCO has close links with the patients' organisations through the European Federation of Crohn's and Colitis Associations (EFCCA), who are represented on ECCO's Strategic Council, as is UEGF.

ECCO is a strong supporter of UEGF, through interaction with other member organisations, developing Consensus guidelines according to the highest international standards, or running joint workshops with ECSP, ESGAR, ESGE, ESP, and ESPGHAN. It looks back with huge appreciation on the support provided by UEGF, when UEGF recognised the nascent ECCO as an Associate Member of UEGF at its origin in 2001. ECCO enjoys a valuable co-operation with UEGF, embracing involvement in UEGF committees, contribution to the UEGW scientific programme and educational initiatives of UEGF (monothematic initiatives, postgraduate educational proposals (PEPs), scientific workshops) and promoting the cause of Gastroenterology in Europe. ECCO congratulates UEGF on the leadership it has shown in Gastroenterology over the past 20 years and looks forward to the future.

##### EDS

##### *European Digestive Surgery*

Communication and collaboration are the keys to bringing visceral surgery, education and research to the attention of the scientific community, not only in Europe, but worldwide. Therefore, in September 1995, 25 scientific-minded gastrointestinal surgeons founded a new European society: European Digestive Surgery (EDS). The aim of EDS is to foster the practice of digestive surgery through clinical and basic scientific research and postgraduate training. Once a year EDS organises the " EDS Postgraduate Course" with a wide variety of

state-of-the-art lectures by a renowned local and international faculty. Furthermore, we offer Evidence-Based Medicine and advanced laparoscopic surgery workshops as part of the Postgraduate Teaching Course.

EDS was founded to meet the needs of the United European Gastroenterology Federation (UEGF) for a strong and innovative scientific surgical partner for its annual European meeting (United European Gastroenterology Week). The society became an Associate Member of the UEGF at the beginning of 1999 and overall membership in the organisation has increased to more than 1600. In addition, the make-up of our society is becoming increasingly international, with esteemed surgeons from a total of 62 countries. EDS is a dynamic organisation with experts from around the world striving to promote gastrointestinal surgery and to improve the treatment of gastrointestinal diseases worldwide.

##### EHSG

##### *European Helicobacter Study Group*

The EHSG was founded in 1987, some 5 years before the creation of the UEGF. This is a non-profit association aiming to disseminate and promote research information related to Helicobacter pylori (H.pylori) and other Helicobacter and their associated disease. More recently it has been more focused on gastric malignancies and the prevention of this by H. pylori eradication.

Our board consists of members from most countries of the European Union. They were chosen on their citation and contribution to H.pylori research. An annual workshop in different European cities has been organised since 1988. The workshop proceedings are published every year in the journal Helicobacter. A special edition of the journal is published every year with reviews of the latest information on H.pylori. Every 5 years

recommendations on the management of “who, how and when to treat the infection” (Maastricht conferences) is published in Gut.

The interaction with UEGF began 10 years ago when our group was integrated as an associate member. We have a representative on the Scientific Committee who participates in the preparation of the UEGW programme in the area of Upper Digestive Diseases, especially gastroduodenal diseases related to H. pylori. We hold symposia at the UEGW every year presenting new data including the Maastricht 3 and 4 recommendations. The Nobel Prize Award for H.pylori in 2005 was an occasion of a special event at the UEGW. We are proud to have Barry Marshall as an honorary member of our group.

The EHSG interacts with other UEGF committees such as Public Affairs, Education and Future Trends. We are proud of the achievements of members of our group who have been elected Presidents of the UEGF, e.g. Peter Malfertheiner, Anthony Axon and Colm O’Morain. Colm O’Morain is our current President as well as the President of the UEGF. The first recipient of the Life-time Achievement Award, Guido Tytgat, is also a Honorary Member of our group, testifying the close relationship between the EHSG and UEGF.

#### ESCP

##### *European Society of Coloproctology*

The European Society of Coloproctology was formed in 2005 from a merger of EACP (European Association of Coloproctology) and ECCP (European Council of Coloproctology). Among its objectives are; the promotion and advancement of the science, knowledge and practice of coloproctology in Europe, the promotion and performance of scientific studies in the fields of colonic, rectal and anal diseases, the organisation of conferences and events to promote the scientific and clinical training of its members, the establishment

of standards throughout Europe for training in the field of coloproctology, and promotion of coloproctology as a medical specialty in Europe. ESCP has entered in a fruitful collaboration with UEGF to obtain these goals that are to a large extent common to both societies. It is through un-biased teamwork that the success of UEGF has been nurtured. ESCP is active in a number of UEGF committees and in recent years this work has been intensified due to the, no doubt, impressive professionalization of UEGF. From a personal point of view my work in the scientific committee, the council, and my contact with the superb secretarial office has been most rewarding. ESCP congratulates UEGF on their 20th anniversary and would like to express their hope that the collaboration between our societies will continue to prosper in the next 20 years. Alexander Engel, UEGF/UEGW representative for ESCP.

#### ESDO

##### *European Society of Digestive Oncology*

The European Society of Digestive Oncology (ESDO) is a non-profit scientific and educational association, consisting of Individual Members, National Societies and Study Groups of digestive oncology. The focus of ESDO lies in increasing the expertise for physicians from all backgrounds with special interest in digestive cancers, based on scientific evidence. ESDO’s mission is to propagate best practice and to improve diagnosis and treatment of gastrointestinal tumors through the spread of optimal, evidence-based, multidisciplinary strategies for digestive cancers. ESDO aims to improve the quality of care for patients suffering from GI cancers by stimulating interdisciplinary collaboration. Furthermore ESDO will enhance and promote the screening, early detection, primary prevention and management of pre-malignant and/or malignant diseases of the GI-tract. ESDO also promotes good science and research in digestive oncology. As a particular

field of interest ESDO organises education and academic exchange in the field of digestive oncology and develops guidelines and recommendations for all aspects of digestive oncology for the benefit of patients.

Founded in 2009, ESDO is the youngest society among the other UEGF members and is therefore not in the position to look back on a long history of interaction yet. Despite this our society is deeply grateful for UEGF’s excellent support during ESDO’s foundation process and beyond. We would like to give our heartiest congratulations to UEGF on the occasion of its 20th anniversary and add our wish that UEGF will enjoy further success in steadily increasing gastroenterological knowledge within Europe and the world. We are proud to make a contribution to the prosperity of our outstanding Federation!

#### ESGAR

##### *European Society of Gastrointestinal and Abdominal Radiology*

The European Society of Gastrointestinal and Abdominal Radiology (ESGAR) was founded during 1989 with the first annual meeting taking place in Crete the following year. Since then the Society has rapidly grown and developed reflecting the central role that imaging plays in the multidisciplinary management of patients. The Society remains a “not for profit”, educational and scientific organisation with clear objectives to advance the discipline of GI and abdominal imaging including intervention in both Europe and increasingly worldwide. The ESGAR annual meeting provides a focus for the dissemination of the latest scientific and education developments as well as updating members on the evolving role of imaging in the clinical management of patients. Above all the Society continues to bring together and foster friendships between GI and abdominal radiologists throughout the world both at the annual meeting as well as during the various

workshops and courses the Society organises throughout the year.

The important role that the UEGF plays in advancing the aspirations of various societies with an interest in diseases of the digestive tract was recognised very early by ESGAR. The Society was therefore keen to play an active and collaborative role, joining the Federation as an associate member society in 1999 following discussions with our past president Professor Plinio Rossi. Since then ESGAR has continued to positively interact with the Federation in order to promote and develop the concept of multidisciplinary patient care. This has included regular presentations by members during annual UEGW conferences, with other ESGAR members also proactively sitting on various UEGF bodies including the scientific, education and future trends committees. In addition, the Society has more recently helped develop a number of multidisciplinary GI events with other UEGF member societies and in the spirit of multidisciplinary cooperation, has inaugurated an annual UEGF lecture during our own ESGAR annual meeting. The first UEGF honorary lecture was delivered by Professor Michael Farthing in Dresden, Germany during 2010. The ESGAR continues to actively interact with the UEGF and looks forward to further collaboration over the next twenty years in order to proactively help, lead and develop a true multidisciplinary approach to the management of patients with GI related diseases.

#### ESNM

##### *European Society of Neurogastroenterology and Motility*

The European Society of Neurogastroenterology and Motility was founded in Leuven, Belgium in 1982. The ESNM is a society with over 1600 individual members organised in regional chapters that hold local activities and regular meetings.

The ESNM aims at defending the interests of all professionals in Europe involved in the study of neurobiology and pathophysiology of gastrointestinal function. Overall, the European Society of Neurogastroenterology and Motility represents physicians and researchers with specific interests in the study of Neurogastroenterology and Motility and therefore in the diagnosis and management of pathological conditions such as GERD, functional dyspepsia, irritable bowel syndrome, constipation, diarrhea, visceral pain, and incontinence. The ESNM has recently (2011) launched a section on "Gut Microbiome and Health" to include this important aspect of Neurogastroenterology research and practice. The ESNM incorporates the opinion leaders of both basic science and clinical research across Europe, which provides direct access to all practicing doctors involved in the diagnosis and treatment of these disorders.

Whilst being an associate member of the UEGF, the ESNM also holds strong ties to its sister Neurogastroenterology and Motility societies around the world. The ESNM is managed by Doris Möstl and her crew at Medadvice since 2010 which has been very much to its advantage and has aided its development. The ESNM gave up its own meeting to centralise its activities within the UEGW. Furthermore, the ESNM actively contributes to the educational activities of the UEGF and also participates in the discussion forum fEMGa (forum of European Medical Gastroenterological Associations).

#### ESPCG

##### *European Society for Primary Care Gastroenterology*

The initiative to establish The European Society for Primary Care Gastroenterology (ESPCG) was taken at a Primary Care Gastroenterology Meeting in Scheveningen, Holland in 1994 by a group of academic general practitioners with an interest in gastroenterology. In 1996 ESPCG

was founded at an academic lunch cruise on a steamboat in Stockholm, Sweden, premises also used for our 15 anniversary celebration during UEGW 2011. As the first president, was "Mr. primary care gastroenterology" Roger Jones elected.

The aim of ESPCG is to conduct research in the primary care and unselected population settings, and to endeavour to implement evidence based medicine in the field of gastroenterology in primary care. ESPCG now has active societies in 14 European countries and a membership which exceeds 500 members. ESPCG is one of the Special interest groups of WONCA, the European primary care organisation. As a reflection of the two ambitions of the organisation, promoting both primary care and gastroenterology, in 1998 the ESPCG became an associate "daughter" organisation of the UEGF. ESPCG provides representation of primary care in the scientific, educational and public affairs committees. The ESPCG was one of the initiators of the e-learning portal of the UEGF.

## Significant figures of UEGF

### Past Chairmen of Council & Presidents of UEGF

**2011 – 2012** Colm O'Morain

**2010 – 2011** Rolf Hultcrantz

**2008 – 2009** Juan-R. Malagelada

**2006 – 2007** Anthony Axon

**2005** Peter Ferenci

**2004** Peter Malfertheiner

**2003** Peter Milla

**2002** Christoph Beglinger

**2001** Alberto Montori

**2000** Mario Mondelli

**1999** Edward Farthman

**1998** Constantine Arvanitakis

**1997** Jacques Schmitz

**1995** Klaus Gyr

**1994** Peter Jansen

**1992** Vincenzo Speranza

### Secretary Generals of UEGF

**2006 – 2013** Christoph Beglinger

**1996 – 2005** Juan-R. Malagelada

**1992 – 1995** Hermon Dowling

### Treasurers of UEGF

**2004 – 2011** Peter Milla

**2001 – 2003** Josep R Armengol-Miro

**1992 – 2000** Alberto Montori

### Lifetime Achievement Award

**2011** Hermon Dowling

**2010** Juan-R. Malagelada

**2009** Guido Tytgat

### Research Prize

**2011** Pierre-Alain Clavien

**2010** Hans Clevers

**2009** Jean-Frederic Colombel

**2008** Markus Neurath



## Personal Reflections

**These short memoirs are the personal reflections of individuals who have all in one way or another been particularly influential in the development of this extraordinary organisation. There is little doubt that without them and their devotion, enthusiasm and hard work UEGF would not be the same as it is today, a vibrant, thrusting and innovative organisation. These reflections provide insight into their thoughts about the Federation.**

### UEGF history: a personal view

*Herman Dowling Secretary Interim Coordinating*

*Council 1989-1992, UEGF Secretary General 1992-1995*

The purpose of this personal memoir is not to be repetitive but rather to see what we have learned from our history by looking back; and how we might benefit from it by looking forward.

### Looking back: was the federal concept correct?

As this book clearly shows, there are many versions of the “historical truth” about the evolution of European gastroenterology, the birth of the UEGF and the genesis of the UEGW. Certainly no one had a monopoly on the idea that we should organise a yearly European gastroenterology meeting. Nonetheless in 1998, our original concept was that such an annual meeting should replace the quadrennial International (predominantly European) Congresses of Gastroenterology – organised jointly by ASNEMGE and the ESGE. Initially, we imagined that the annual meetings, like the four-yearly International Congresses, would also be organised by the same two bodies. However as noted above, in 1988 the then President of ASNEMGE, Aldo Torsoli, foresaw the difficulties in such an arrangement. His speculation that we would succeed only with the support of several existing European general and sub-specialist gastroenterology societies was probably correct. Therefore, his amendment to the original idea, although obviously important, was at the same time both inspired and

problematic – and it remains so 24 years later.

For the most part, the general GI societies within the original “Seven sisters” of the UEGF (ASNEMGE, EAGE AND ESGE) have embraced the unified concept, sacrificing partisan loyalties in the interests of the Federation. Indeed, given the success of the UEGF and of its highly successful UEGWs, some of these general Societies have already ceased to exist – their previous roles being taken over by the Federation. However, the hepatologists (EASL), pancreatologists (EPC), paediatricians (ESPHGAN) and, to a lesser extent, the surgeons (ISDS) all had dual loyalties since their sub-specialty interests were already being served by high-quality annual scientific meetings. For these valid and understandable reasons, they are either reluctant, or unable to abandon their identity completely, and to embrace the federal concept in its entirety. This unforeseen side-effect of the Torsoli amendment is still creating difficulties for the UEGF Council today.

### Looking forward: lessons learned from history

Why then have the UEGF, and its annual Weeks, been so successful? Based on lessons learned during our short history, there are many possible answers to this deceptively simple rhetorical question.

First, the timing was right since in the 1980s there was a yawning gap in the frequency of pan-European gastroenterology meetings. Most other European medical specialties were already running successful annual conferences in their own fields. Therefore the proposal that we should emulate them by doing the same for gastroenterology was like pushing at the proverbial open door.

Second, the successful implementation of this dream probably depended on a number of circumstances and personal characteristics:

- Enthusiasm for the European ideal (but not necessary for its bureaucracy) – as opposed to maintaining the nationalistic status quo.
- An unwavering belief in the potential advantages and strengths of a Federal structure – as opposed to narrow-minded self-interest.
- Evangelism for a global approach to all aspects of gut and liver disease – in other words, to be a “lumper” rather than a “splitter”.
- Sufficient largesse of mind to abandon self-interest and to embrace the concept of learning from other disciplines, outside our own “comfort zones”.
- Acceptance of the fact that cultures, traditions and business methods vary widely in different parts of Europe, coupled with tolerance and the ability to concede that southern European methods are neither better or worse than those of Northern climes, and vice versa.
- The willingness to consider and adopt new ideas, and the flexibility and open-mindedness of Council, as the UEGF and its annual meetings grew and evolved.
- The diplomacy and interpersonal skills of Aldo Torsoli who successfully blended a group of disparate individuals and disciplines together.
- The help and support of industry (through the BMI liaison committee), coupled with the fund-raising skills of a charismatic treasurer (Alberto Montori), which facilitated progress of the federal dream.
- The energy and determination to achieve these goals through persistence and hard work, by all those involved.
- A large slice of good luck!

### Evolution of the voice of European Gastroenterology

*Peter Milla UEGF Treasurer 2003-2011*

My contact with UEGF started 20 years ago at the first UEGW in Athens. Coming from a

very successful subspecialist society it had become clear to me that our speciality was catching up with American gastroenterology. Indeed in paediatric gastroenterology the boot was on the other foot and our cousins across the pond were striving to achieve what was happening in Europe. I was therefore curious about this new organisation and what it might mean for the further development of European Gastroenterology.

At the early UEGWs I was able to observe the result of a remarkable achievement of bringing these societies together in a common enterprise without understanding the trials and tribulations that were running from time to time behind the scenes. It was only on joining Council as Secretary and later President of ESPGHAN that the “warts” became visible, the constant jostling for position by some councillors to gain advantage for the organisation they represented rather than for the nascent UEGF they were part of left a deep impression on one who was used to a united council with a common purpose.

I was convinced that UEGF was the way forward for the future of European Gastroenterology. The reforms undertaken under the clear and persuasive leadership of Juan Malagelada as Secretary General resulted in many of the tensions disappearing and a clear plan of future development made. It was during this time that my turn to act as Chairman of Council occurred. I remember the previous Chairman saying to me on the eve of taking up my turn of office. “Don’t worry you really do not have to do anything.” How wrong could he have been! I very soon had to deal with a major crisis – a mutiny in the organisation reminiscent of former times. However with the generosity and devotion to the Federation which was developing in Council the potential catastrophe was averted.

The last ten years have been remarkable

## Personal Reflections

in the progress made in turning UEGF into a thoroughly modern and professional organisation which by increased democracy and accountability, establishment of the Scientific, Public Affairs and Education Committees, involvement of National Societies in the General Assembly and now a National Societies Committee has allowed UEGF to develop as “The Voice of European gastroenterology”. Taking over the organisation of UEGW ensured that all that was best in European gastrointestinal medicine would be showcased at UEGW. The federal structure of UEGF enabled European gastroenterology to work harmoniously together to achieve this and our cultural heterogeneity enabled us to present state of the art European clinical and basic research in a lively and exciting way. The increased income from UEGW has without doubt transformed UEGF’s ability to develop activities, outside of the Week and to provide the leadership of our discipline. It has been my privilege as UEGF Treasurer to develop the firm financial base that makes this possible. What of the future. Our scientific, educational and political programme is firmly mapped out and provided we maintain our present happy financial position our projected programme will continue to advance European Gastroenterology. However additional streams of funding to ensure our future are urgently required which I feel sure that the enthusiasm and flexibility of Council and our Executive will with the support of our Secretariat be able to develop. The UEGF dream started by a farseeing band of friends and colleagues will come through.

Happy Birthday UEGF.

### Vision, enthusiasm and loyalty

**Juan Ramon Malagelada** *UEGF President 2008-2009, Secretary-General 1996-2005*

Today, the United European Gastroenterology Federation (UEGF) is prosperous and in good

health. It has the active and sympathetic support of its member societies, a strong central organisation and a successful UEGW meeting that ensures financial stability. Things were not so good in former days. UEGF was born out of conflict and competition among individual leaders and groups seeking to establish a pan-European meeting and its underlying administrative base, that could be leveraged and tilted towards one or another camp. What an extraordinary series of events and political achievements have taken place over the last 20 years, to culminate in the outstanding organisation European gastroenterologists can be legitimately proud of today!

Although turbulences marked its infancy, with time attitudes turned around. The leaders and representatives of the federated groups that sat around the Council table gradually, but steadily, shifted their allegiances from purely seeking advantage for the groups they led or represented to genuine and honest efforts to consolidate UEGF and make it a democratic and transparent organisation. Thus, if I had to choose a few words to describe the process that enabled UEGF to reach today’s peak, I would say vision, enthusiasm and generosity. No surprise, of course. Without most successive councillors adhering to these guiding principles, it would have not been possible to bring a collective enterprise like UEGF to reach the ambitious goals envisioned by its founders.

I am not particularly fond of history and even less of nostalgia. I think what really matters is what happens now. The best of UEGF is what we all enjoy today. We should celebrate the ascent and concentrate on the future.

The next 10-20 years of UEGF should see the organisation becoming a truly representative and also comprehensive supranational organisation. It needs to constantly

stimulate the interest and the loyalty of its member societies and national societies, of course, but also of individual European gastroenterologists. These should increasingly look at UEGW for presenting their best research and debating it with the challenge offered by their most competent peers. Also as a reliable source of knowledge about the latest advances and the best approaches to diagnosis and therapy.

UEGF has goals that are not only those of a top annual congress. Europe is well on the road to economic and professional unification, although not yet political unification. It is very apparent that, in the science of medicine, national identities remain strong and that language barriers are still an obstacle to perfect synchrony, at least in some parts of Europe. This means that UEGF has a noble mission to foster a European gastroenterology identity and to coordinate professional behaviour, while maintaining due respect for national prerogatives and even idiosyncrasies. One obvious pan-European role for UEGF is to establish a productive dialogue with European Union health officials and EU research agencies on behalf of all European gastroenterologists and professionals in related fields. The main objective is to document and persuade these influential players of the importance of appropriately funding digestive health and digestive disease research as well as preventive programmes to improve the well being of the European population.

Education is another important role for UEGF. The Federation is persuaded that continuing medical education (CME) in gastroenterology and allied fields needs to be expanded beyond UEGW. UEGW represents a “once a year” educational event with large but finite audiences. CME, as understood by UEGF, has more ambitious and diversified goals to be attained through a variety of means including

organising up-to-date and quality programmes throughout the year diverse in geographical location and content. Increasingly, on line educational activities will play a major role as well. Second, there is the need to completely uncouple CME programmes from pharma and instrument industry interests. UEGF sponsorship should be a valuable mechanism to deliver truly independent CME. UEGF educational activities are conceived with faculty and audiences drawn from transnational pools collaborating but not competing with member / national societies.

We cannot forget the charitable dimension of UEGF. We should introduce a new paradigm: to engage both medical professionals and lay people to work for the common good. Support programmes directed towards healthier life styles, prevention oriented habits, functional foods, etc. This charitable dimension of UEGF needs to be further developed to help project UEGF as a compassionate organisation endowed with high corporate social responsibility and, hence, concerned with public needs.

Ultimately UEGF should strive to fulfill the latent desire, at least for the younger generations, to achieve a single comprehensive, efficient and representative organisation for European gastroenterologists.

### A great pan-European movement

**Guido Tytgat** *President EAGE 1990-1995*

It all started, for me at least, some 30 years ago when some of the EAGE board members who had trained in the USA started dreaming of expanding the EAGE to become a pan-European society, responsible for creating an annual European Digestive Disease Week (EDDW) as a counterpart of the successful American DDW. Amongst the reasons for our growing enthusiasm were: the expanding European contribution in basic and clinical gastroenterology and hepatology

## Personal Reflections

in the American DDW, the realisation of the substantial differences between American and European organisational structures and overall GI practice and a gradual regression of a sense of European inferiority. The dreams ultimately culminated in 1990 in a multisociety European DDW in Vienna meeting followed in 1991 by the successful Amsterdam EDDW. These two conferences should turn out to be the starting point of the later United European Gastroenterology Week (UEGW). In parallel with the EAGE aspirations, several other societies, especially ASNEMGE also enthusiastically explored the possibility of creating a pan-European umbrella-like society, responsible for an annual pan-European DDW. A meeting in Ponza with representatives of all interested societies was the true starting point of a great pan-European movement which ultimately culminated in the creation of the United European Gastroenterology Federation, UEGF. In 1992 EAGE cancelled its annual DDW to participate in the first United European digestive week UEDW in Athens in the hope that this would be the start of a long and prosperous tradition. Since Athens, UEGF has developed and matured with an unprecedented and unforeseen speed to become the leading umbrella organisation, responsible for creating a pan-European platform for GI-related basic science and for top-class clinical teaching. What can one wish for the future UEGF should continue to treasure its openness to embrace any novel European developments such as the ESDO-IDCA society etc. UEGF should remain cognizant of its varying cultural backgrounds, which is indeed our strength. UEGF should continue to harmonize gastroenterology throughout Europe with dedicated attention to central and eastern Europe and avoiding western European dominance. UEGF should prioritize nurturing young talent and facilitating pan-European exchange. UEGF should strengthen the belief in its collective wisdom and in its ultimate role as a role

model for global gastroenterology concerning expertise in care and cure. Ultimately a dream that will come through.

### Looking back at UEGF personal view from the Secretary General

*Christoph Beglinger Secretary-General 2006-2013*

The first vision of a true European Gastroenterology organisation emerged in 1988 with a clearly defined goal. To organise a major meeting based on all the different European associations and societies dealing with diseases of the gastrointestinal tract which was to become the best meeting in the world and a truly European Digestive Disease Week. It took only a few years of thinking and discussing. In 1992 an organisation was put in place called the United European Gastroenterology Federation (UEGF). The seven founding members formed the basis of the organisation, but over the years many more societies joined the organisation. Today 20 years later, all the major representatives of societies dealing with digestive diseases are included in the organisation.

I was introduced to UEGF in 1999, when I joined Council as representative of the European Pancreatic Club. At that time Council consisted of 2 delegates of each founding member giving a total of 14 Council Members. Council was the governing body of the organisation with a president, a treasurer and a secretary general, all 3 elected by the Council. Over time with an increasing number of new societies joining UEGF, the structure of UEGF became static and inflexible, but more important it did not give proper representation to the new members joining the Federation. Over several years under the strong leadership of Juan Malagelada, the secretary general of the organisation at that time, UEGF was transformed into a modern, professional medical organisation comprising all the major European societies with an interest in the diseases of the digestive system.

In the year 2000 I became Chairman of a newly formed Scientific Committee, which was responsible for organising the programme of the annual meeting on behalf of the Federation. It was a great honour to serve the Federation in this form and help organising the next 3 annual meetings in Geneva, Madrid and Prague. The formation of a Scientific Committee of the Federation was a major change from previous formats, as in the first years after the foundation of UEGF the meeting was given and organised by a national society; with the new format, the Federation was now responsible for the format and the content of the week (UEGW). In 2005 I was elected secretary general of the UEGF. Since then I have had the privilege to participate in the transformation of the organisation and we can proudly state that the current structure is clearly different from what it was a few years back: we have established a permanent office in Vienna with 13 people working for UEGF run by Mrs. Doris Moestl, located in a building, which we like to call the "House of European Gastroenterology". The team, under the guidance of Doris, helps to organise the different activities of UEGF, which have increased dramatically over the years. Apart from organising the week under the leadership of the Scientific Committee, we have an Education Committee, a Public Affairs Committee, a Future Trends Committee and a Committee for National Societies. Within these 2 decades, UEGF has developed from a vision into the leading European organisation devoted to advancing medical progress in the field of digestive diseases. We can truly state that UEGW has grown and developed into a prime meeting, which is comparable to any of the best meetings in the field in the world. I had the privilege to participate in this process and I admit that it was a wonderful experience.

*Chris J Hawkey UEGF Councillor 2002-2005, President ASNEMGE 1999-2002, Secretary-General 1997-1999*

My first significant involvement with UEGF came when I was asked to organise the scientific programme for the Birmingham 1997 UEGW. I was to present our plans to UEGF Council at the 1995 UEGF at 4pm. With time on my hands, I had an extended lunch and a haircut and arrived promptly at 3.55pm ... only to find that I had misread the schedule and I should have been there at 14.00 (as everyone knows Britain is at the heart of Europe but some different notations still persist!). Had the ground opened up and swallowed me then I would have been nothing but grateful!

Despite this faltering start we put together a tolerably good meeting. Attendance numbers were up, the feedback was good and there was a staggering 47% of scientific attenders in a scientific session at any time. There are two points to be made about this statistic: Firstly it probably reflects the limited attractions of Birmingham, more than the compelling pull of my scientific programme. Secondly, we gathered this statistic by asking each room minder to do a head count halfway through the session. We also used scannable forms to process information right up until mid-day on the Wednesday to have quantitative assessments of the meeting ready for the UEGF Council two hours later (no rerun of the earlier timing mistake!). These are statistics which I feel UEGF should publish in relation to each meeting even now.

Actually, my comments are unfair both to Birmingham and to the meeting. I think it was a good programme. One of the things I introduced was mixed didactic and original seminars. However, the state of computing in 1997 was so primitive that planning still involved making scores of piles of paper around my study over the course of the weekend. For the plenary session we used three high level state-of-the-art lectures



## Personal Reflections

to get, and keep, an audience in a session that occupied a full morning so that several thousand people also listened to the best original papers on offer.

Birmingham was an exhausting experience but I enjoyed it so when a central scientific organising committee was set up I accepted the invitation to join it with alacrity. Then I discovered it clashed with another commitment in the USA that I could not get out of. Still smarting from my Berlin impression. I leave it to you to decide) of unreliability (true or false?) I wrote several pages detailing my own ideas of how the meetings should be organised as a substitute for attending in person and joining the discussion. It was with some consternation that I learnt that no discussions were had and my plan was simply adopted (I caricature this a bit!).

Then I became a member (later Secretary and President) of the ASNEMGE Council. Like many people for a while I was never quite sure what ASNEMGE was and what its relationship to UEGF was or indeed what the initials stood for (and still less how to pronounce the full name in a passable French accent: Hermon Dowling, you have much to answer for!). As President I became a member of UEGF Council. One of the councillors (no names, no pack drill!) suggested at my first Council meeting that I should wind up ASNEMGE. To be honest by then I could see the point but UEGF itself was not at a sufficient stage of development for this to have been a wise move. Nevertheless, I think the progress that has ultimately resulted in fusion of UEGF and ASNEMGE and the move towards a member organisation are to be welcomed.

The ASNEMGE headquarters used to rotate around, and be housed in, the town in which the current President worked. It seemed to me that to be effective you needed a fixed location and Secretariat. We chose Vienna: for Peter

Ferenci, then President, it meant he could cycle to the meetings and for me as an opera fan it seemed a good idea!

I remember meeting a young woman who had been allocated to take care of ASNEMGE. Her name was Doris Moestl. She seemed ambitious and I had a feeling she was going places and this turned out to be the case in several senses! The rest, as they say, is history and Doris is now our supreme leader!

### UEGF: a perspective from the ASNEMGE

**Gerard P. van Berge Henegouwen**

*ASNEMGE Secretary-General 1992-1996*

Before 1990, the ASNEMGE (Association des Sociétés Nationales Européennes et Méditerranéennes de Gastroenterologie) Council was much concerned about the diversity of Gastroenterology and Hepatology organisations in Europe. The leading gastroenterologists in Europe were also concerned with the dominance of the yearly Digestive Disease Week in the USA, which attracted so many of our (top) researchers. There was a lot of duplication of effort and this was weakening our common goal – the establishment of a high academic standard of gastroenterology practice in the European and Mediterranean countries. It was generally agreed that one annual scientific meeting would be much better than competing with each other for attention and attendance. Thus, the foundation of an Interim Coordinating Council in 1989 and the UEGF Council in 1991, as organised by the seven sister organisations in gastroenterology and endoscopy at that time, was not only very timely, but also a great opportunity to start a number of common important activities. It was also particularly timely because of the emergence of new awareness and activities in gastroenterology in Eastern European countries.

Since the main function of ASNEMGE

before that time was the organisation of the quadrennial European congresses in conjunction with the European Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, the UEGF could now officially start the organisation of the yearly United European Gastroenterology Week (UEGW) Congresses. The establishment of a firm base for the UEGF and the organisation of the yearly UEGW enabled the UEGF to take the lead in organising postgraduate courses, training and research sessions.

ASNEMGE could now take up other important tasks, such as the initiation and support of separate courses of postgraduate training by the national societies of gastroenterology in Europe, particularly in the Eastern European countries. A unique initiative, for example, has been the organisation of the several postgraduate courses in the 1990's by the Dutch Society of Gastroenterology for different Eastern European countries organised by Chris Mulder and Frits Nelis. ASNEMGE was also very much in favor of creating opportunities for research by foreign exchange between young members of different European societies. Sponsoring for this is now provided at least in part by the revenues of the UEGWs. The organisation of future Young Investigators Meetings, the election of "Rising Stars" and "National Scholars" at the yearly UEGW's were also a result of the increasing success of the UEGW. ASNEMGE could now also help to facilitate ethical guidelines and offer a platform for medical audit from within the UEGF.

Political friction points remained at that time in the young UEGF, as always in European organisations! Examples were who was responsible for the primary contact for cooperation with the OMGE (Organisation Mondiale de Gastroenterologie et Endoscopie) Heated discussions about this at the General Assembly of ASNEMGE and at the UEGF Council meetings were the result. ASNEMGE

claimed this position as the oldest organisation of gastroenterology in Europe, but of course the new UEGF was now in the lead for this. Also the contact with the national societies in Europe as usual was the primary responsibility of the ASNEMGE, but now the UEGF was claiming this for the facilitation of an organisation of individual members from all over Europe! Finally at that time there was sometimes some friction between the members of the Southern and Northern European countries. Although the English language was the accepted communicative tool in the council meetings, it was a surprise, at least for some, to notice that Italian and Spanish members had a sort of common "slang" others could not understand. Always great interests were at stake, country locations for future meetings often the most important target.

The foundation of the UEGF, however, was an important milestone. Now for the first time a real concerted effort could be made by all European gastroenterology bodies to start building a firm structure for training, ethics, and research in gastroenterology in Europe. If we look at the result of the yearly UEGWs today with such large attendances then we know for sure that the UEGF is an immense success story!

With this achievement, the UEGF can be congratulated and I wish the UEGF many more productive and successful years!

### The "Seven Sisters" and the initial steps of UEGF

**Massimo Crespi** *UEGF Councillor 1992-1994,*

*President ESGE 1987-1992*

There were so many uncertainties, jealousies and tensions when we started figuring out the possibility to implement a real Federation and to have one joint yearly congress, but the enthusiasm was great! We found ourselves with a great responsibility towards our

Scientific Societies (at the time I was President of ESGE) and the initial idea by Aldo Torsoli, Hermon Dowling and others was still in a magmatic phase after initial meetings held in Rome. We had to implement new by-laws, decide a proper share of revenues from that annual congress and try to convince some of the possible partners, particularly the surgeons and the hepatologists, to give up their individual congresses.

For the crucial “foundation meeting” we had the idea to hold it in a relaxed atmosphere and selected the beautiful Island of Ponza, off the coast from Rome, where for some years I had spent my vacations. It was finally a good choice, even if we had logistic and travel problems beyond any imagination. Thanks to the perfect organisation managed by the first PCO “Studio EGA” and the enthusiasm and good will of the participants we were able, in two days, to draft the by-laws, to invent the so called “Ponza formula” to share the surplus of the UEGW, to enjoy beautiful weather and sumptuous fish meals and, at the end, we could say “mission accomplished” and “yes we can”, two sentences later much abused by high level politicians.

### **We Can't Look To The Future Without Considering The Past**

*Alberto Montori UEGF Treasurer 1992-1999*

It is a very nice initiative to celebrate in 2012 the 20th Anniversary of our Federation.

On the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the UEGW, the Governing Council of the UEGF decided to have a celebration in Geneva in 2002. It was indeed an unforgettable event! All the people involved in the Federation from the beginning, were present: the Chairmen, the Members of the Council and of the Committees, the representatives of the first PCO “Studio EGA” and the administrative employees. Chris Beglinger, following our traditional practice, organised a sumptuous dinner prepared on one single table. All

together, in order to emphasize the concept of “UNITY”. The atmosphere was fantastic. The enthusiasm engendered helped to achieve the enormous success of the UEGF.

During the second decade of the XXI Century the UEGF has grown and nowadays our Federation is one of the most appreciated scientific Associations in the field of Gastroenterology. This outstanding success has been possible thanks to the devotion of the Members of the Council, the Block Society Representatives, the Chairmen of the Committees and the contribution of the Member Societies of the UEGF.

These good results were only reached after a lot of work and much diplomacy during the early years starting with the initial faltering steps of the Federation. Amongst us Founding Members, the most active was Aldo Torsoli and on this occasion we should pay homage to him. He was able to coordinate and to set up the project for our Federation.

The first Meeting in L' Aquila in 1990 elected an “Interim Coordinating Council”. The “Foundation Meeting” with delegates from the Founding Societies, the Seven Sisters (ASNEMGE, ESGE, EAGE, EASL, EFISDS, EPC, ESPGHAN), took place on the Island of Ponza in 1991. Constantine Arvanitakis organised the first UEGW, Athens 1992.

I would also like to consider the fact that, during the first 10 years of the Federation, as well as many good results, we had a lot of disappointing situations. The disappointments were related to the lack of interest in the Federation from some in the nutrition industry, the National and International (European) Institutions and a number of Biomedical Companies. Consequently it was a challenge to collect funds for the activities of the UEGF.

The enthusiasm, the determination and the devotion of the Members involved, year by year, made the difference and today our Federation is a good example of cooperation in a multidisciplinary approach in the study and treatment of digestive diseases. It is a fact that our Federation could be used as a role model in many other federative organisations which involve many countries with different history and background!

Happy anniversary and long life to UEGF, convinced that in the future the spirit of UEGF will continue to stimulate the creativity, adaptability and efficiency to promote progress thanks to research, scientific evaluation, teaching and training in the field of Gastroenterology.

### **UEGF and Europe, personal reflections of the development of UEGF and its association with the National Societies**

*Rolf Hultcrantz President Elect,*

*President of UEGF 2008-2011. General Secretary and*

*President of ASNEMGE 2005-2008*

ASNEMGE was an association for the national Gastroenterological Societies and had a scientific meeting every fourth year with its last meeting in 1988 in Rome. ASNEMGE and its General Secretary, at the time Hermon Dowling, was one of the initiators of UEGF and UEGW, which has become a success and is these days probably the most important scientific and educational GI meeting in the world. The initial purpose of UEGF was to hold an annual meeting in Gastroenterology and Hepatology together with the National Societies, but it was not until both the programme and running of the meeting was taken over by UEGF, the meeting really took off. Thus for the first 12-15 years UEGF concentrated on the meeting and development of scientific associations.

However, as the EU developed and more centralized health care political decision-making was developing, it seemed necessary

that UEGF should become a stronger force in order to promote Gastroenterology in European Health care, and UEGF improved this work through the public affairs committee. During my term as President elect I realised that UEGF had little or no contact with the National associations. ASNEMGE had increased their activities mainly on the educational level. I realized that without a strong help from the National Societies in Europe it would not be possible for UEGF to become a strong factor in the EU. Thus, during my two years as president I first worked on making good contact with the scientific associations but mainly the National Societies. I did what Katharina Buder from the UEGF secretariat and I called a “Road Show”, travelling to all major associations in Europe promoting UEGF and showing them the possibilities they all had if they worked through UEGF in political matters rather than by themselves. However it was obvious that the most important step would be to get the National Societies to become direct members of UEGF rather than members through ASNEMGE. In order to do so ASNEMGE had to be dissolved. Since I was an ASNEMGE person I realized that no one could be better suited to suggest it and after several months of discussions with the ASNEMGE general secretary Mark Hull and president Franco Bazzoli, we managed to come to a solution with a win-win deal. Mark Hull was instrumental in getting all the practical details in place and during the autumn of 2011 ASNEMGE was dissolved and the National Societies became members of UEGF with a seat on UEGF council.

My belief is that following this change, UEGF will be able to become not only a stronger scientific and educational organisation, but also a stronger political power, which will lead to better care for patients with gastrointestinal disorders in Europe, a goal which we all work for.

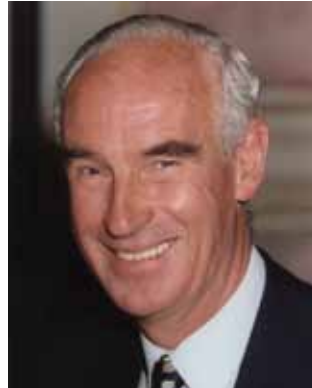
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## UEGW Personalities and Events



Opening Plenary, GASTRO 2009



Charity Run, UEGW 2008



Markus Neurath, Research Prize 2008



Association Village, UEGW 2011



John Atherton, Chair Scientific Committee at meet the Expert, UEGW 2010



Rock the Congress UEGW, Stockholm 2012



Anthony Axon, UEGW 2006



Exhibition, UEGW 2010



Guido Tytgat, Lifetime Achievement Award 2009  
*The first Lifetime Achievement awardee*



Charity run, Barcelona 2010



International Scholars, UEGW 2010



Horst Neuhaus, Live Endoscopy UEGW 2010



## UEGW Personalities and Events



Barry Marshall, UEGW 2006  
Nobel Prize for Medicine



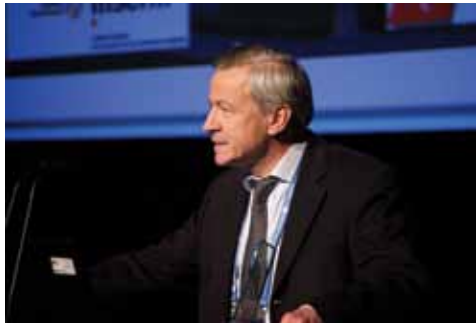
Juan-R. Malagelada, Lifetime Achievement Award 2010



Press conference, UEGW 2008



DDW Team, UEGW 2007



Jean-Frederic Colombel, Research Prize 2009



Hans Clevers, Research Prize 2010



Vienna Boys Choir, UEGW 2008



Presidential Dinner at UEGW, 2008



Pierre-Alain Clavien, Research Prize 2011



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Public Health Day, GASTRO 2009



UEGW Booth, UEGW 2011

UEGW Posters 2000-2011



UEGW Brussels 2000  
Org. M. Cremer



UEGW Brussels 2001  
Org. G. Tytgat



UEGW Geneva 2002  
Org. K. Gyr



UEGW Berlin 2006



UEGW Paris 2007



UEGW Vienna 2008



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UEGW Prague 2004  
Org. J. Spicak



UEGW Copenhagen 2005  
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UEGW/GASTRO London 2009



UEGW Barcelona 2010



UEGW Stockholm 2011



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Guido Tytgat  
UEGF Member Societies



The House of European Gastroenterology

Henry Ford is often misquoted as saying: “History is bunk” whereas a fuller and more accurate quote is, “History is more or less bunk. It’s tradition. We don’t want tradition. We want to live in the present, and the only history that is worth a tinker’s damn is the history we make today.”

UEGF and UEGW have and are making history. The newest(2011) member organisations in UEGF are the National Societies of Gastroenterology. The transfer of National Society representation in UEGF from ASNEMGE to the National Societies Committee has undoubtedly improved National representation in UEGF, with the clear advantage of greater UEGF benefits for all the 41 National Societies, which are currently members. In the coming years, a stronger National and regional voice in UEGF has great potential for increasing communication between members across Europe and beyond. UEGF will continue as United European Gastroenterology(UEG) continue to strengthen and develop gastroenterology for the good of patients and professionals alike.

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