HIGHLIGHT: Medical Genetics Laboratory Supervisor Recognition

Dear co-members,

We thank the team of Liège for organizing the wonderful and stimulating 12th Annual Meeting of our Society. The achievements of the last couple of years of the Board of the Belgian Society were elucidated during the Annual General Meeting, and thus it is time to look at the future.

Firstly, we do welcome the new Board members, who have been elected for the coming 4 years. They are Katrina Rack, Lut Van Laer and Cécile Libioulle. Hélène Antoine-Poirel was re-elected for a second term of office whilst Catheline Vilain, Sonia Van Dooren, Paul Coucke and I have another two years to our mandate. At the first Board Meeting, Katrina was elected as secretary, Lut as treasurer, and I as chairman.

The current activities of the Board and Work Groups will continue. I would however like to highlight just a few issues in this letter.

1. Recognition of various groups within our Society. The European Society of Human Genetics has been active the last number of years via ad hoc committees, on which some of you serve, for getting recognition for three distinct groups of their members – the clinical/medical geneticists, the medical genetics scientists, and the genetic (nurse) counsellors. The clinical/medical genetics speciality was officially recognized as an EU-wide speciality on 3 March 2011, and most of the member states have official specialist bodies. The statutes for the other groups are formulated and the ESHG is active in getting these recognized. Belgium is one of the few states without any recognition:
   a. The application for the official recognition of the clinical/medical genetics specialist in Belgium has been on the agenda for years and has been submitted to the necessary official body.
   b. The recognition of MEDICAL GENETICS LABORATORY SUPERVISOR by the BeSHG is soon to happen. Under the guidance of Wim Wuyts, the members of BelCoCyt, BCG-HO and BelMolGen have formulated the necessary guidelines, and a Recognition Committee of 2 members from each of these three groups has been elected. Application for recognition is now open – I urge all of you, who believe that you qualify, to look at the BeSHG
website for details. **Retrospective recognition** will only be possible during the next SIX months.

c. In this country, the genetics (nurse) counsellor does not ‘exist’. The new Board intends to organize a discussion/ workshop for members and non-members working in this field in order to review all aspects pertaining to the draft statutes prepared by the ESHG.

2. The **Work Group on Good Clinical Practice** will continue its work but in another format and with clear guidelines as to what is expected of them. We do hope that (a) chairperson(s) will soon be elected to co-ordinate this task.

3. The newly recognized **Work Group Genetics Laboratory Technicians** is active in exploring the various laboratories within the country and will soon be adding a new facet to the Society. They will participate at the **2013 Annual Meeting** to be held in Brussels, probably resulting in part of the sessions being run in parallel sessions.

4. In an ongoing effort to fulfil the aims of this Society in **supporting education** of not only the members but also the public, the Board will be investigating possible ways in participating in meetings and work groups, not only at ground-breaking technology level but also in matters relating to ELSI (Ethical, Legal and Social Issues). Re-initiating participation of the BeSHG in DNA Day is being investigated. The Board remains open to all suggestions from its members.

Other projects will be outlined in forthcoming Newsletters.

Sincerely

*Thomy de Ravel*

Chairman, BeSHG