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December 22nd, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Another year have passed so quickly under the influence and continuing challenges of Covid-19 pandemic. Through our ability to persevere and our resilience we have continuously adapted ourselves to the evolving conditions. Not only as organizations, but also as individuals we all learned new ways of doing things like getting used to utilize digital platforms at all instances from professional meetings to educational events and even for board examinations. We have succeeded our tasks within the frame of this new normal, but with no doubt, as social beings we have all missed the in-person human interaction and the warmth of being face-to-face we used to have.

Congress activities

Thankfully, due to the availability and positive effects of ongoing vaccinations, **in-person meetings** have started to resume starting from last autumn, of course by taking necessary precautions. After being separated for more than a year, our ORL-HNS community have gladly shown a strong desire to meet face-to-face at this year's continued subspecialty society meetings, giving us a strong signal for the future.

Among the biggest of them, the hybrid meeting **ERS2021** in Thessaloniki attracted over 1,100 in-person participation apart from the online ones. Moreover, a post-congress survey conducted on its onsite attendees, which will soon be published in Rhinology have also shown encouraging findings for the upcoming face-to-face meetings. Shortly, the survey queried attendees whether they had developed Covid-19 symptoms, their vaccine status and if they had undergone any Covid-19 tests in the 2 weeks period since their return. Amid 551 responders (58%) from which 538 were vaccinated, only 4 revealed a positive PCR test (all vaccinated, two symptomatic, two asymptomatic), giving the same order as the "background" chance of becoming infected across Europe at the time of Congress. Thus, vaccination and mitigation strategies enforced at the venues seem to work effectively for hopefully ending our longing for each other at even larger meetings and let us look optimistic to the future.

In this regard, the Confederation is eager to conduct its most important educational activity next year, the European Congress to

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be in-person, which intends to bring all of us together for the ongoing development and harmony of our specialty in Europe and beyond.

In 2022, the **6th European ORL-HNS Congress in Milano**, from October 29th to November 2nd www.ceorlhns2022.org is expected to be the biggest face-to-face event that we can reunion with our colleagues and peers from all over the world. As a joint effort of all our member societies, its rich scientific program is evolving fast with already >600 confirmed faculty, 127 round tables, 115 keynote lectures and 112 instructional courses and will be available soon in February 2022, with the opening of the registrations. Please inform your own society and colleagues to save the date and inspire them to convene at this scientific festival. This will surely be next year's most important educational and social ORL-HNS event in Europe that will bring us all together.

Additionally, to raise its awareness among their members and enhance further collaboration, during 2022 the Confederation will also be taking part at **joint meetings** in the form of attendance and organizing sessions at the national German ORL-HNS Congress and the Balkan ORL-HNS Society Congress, as well as with the American Academy AAO-HNSF during the European Congress.

Even though the new waves of Covid-19 are still bothersome, as soon as the unfavorable conditions start to fade away, we are also planning to move forward to organize earlier promised in-person educational activities to reflect current practice pearls to all in practice as well as a three-year curriculum program primarily for our younger colleagues and residents providing a platform to get them ready for the board exams. As an essential part of this project, hereby, we also would like to inform you and get your further support on the inauguration of a **Young Confederation** group. This organization will be very valuable and fundamental for our future to connect and raise friendship and collegiality among our young generations and create a better united European ORL-HNS culture raising from the bottom throughout Europe.

Webpage

Our renewed webpage is also continuously developing as our main communication hub, interconnecting all our member national and subspecialty society's webpages with their flags and logos, while providing information about their activities. The event calendar section already became the main hub for Europe to check all events at one glance. Please register your events there as our webpage statistics indicate that many events are reached especially from

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overseas through the Confederation webpage. Once more, I would like to thank all our members who have reciprocally placed Confederation's logo and give a link to it at their home pages. This is a wonderful way to show our solidarity and unity within Europe and a simple way of getting interconnected. Thus, using this opportunity we kindly would like to remind the last few member societies to provide Confederation logo and links at their websites.

UEMS ORL / EBEORL-HNS

Another very nice example of our unity and the essence of the Confederation have been demonstrated during last year at the level of UEMS Central. Through the diligent efforts of the UEMS-ORL section, which is also a constitutional part of our Confederation, we altogether combined our efforts to support each other and defend our specialty against the overambitious confrontation of another discipline, aiming to swallow our specialty into their curriculum. The Confederation with all its stakeholders is eager to further support UEMS-ORL section on their efforts to protect our specialty's rights against these claims that does not make any sense at all in practical life throughout Europe. We also would like to congratulate the Association of European Board Examination in ORL-HNS to reach a memorandum of understanding with the UEMS Central within this year and be recognized as the only European exam in our field with the name of Otorhinolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery.

When we look back, this again has been another year that was unlike any other. With our human characteristics and abilities to persevere, adapt and flourish, during the course of the pandemic we have been successfully managing problems in unique ways as a community. With our efforts and optimism, we can and should be pursuing a better normal through our efforts, hand in hand with our member societies. We are thankful to see that things are improving and our academic events are slowly getting back on track. We strongly believe that with the positive direction and strong desire of our community, we can overcome all the difficulties on our path forward. We are proud to be a part of our big Confederation family with you being its members. We hope 2022 would bring us further strength to nourish our enthusiasm, motivation and willingness for following our dreams to build a stronger Confederation in Europe and beyond. Stay safe and please get ready to meet in person in 2022, the latest in autumn at the European Congress in Milano.

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The Presidential Council sends you warm season's
greetings and best wishes for a safe and healthy 2022.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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