

## Federation of medical societies kick-off in Stockholm

### A common voice to represent scientific disciplines

*Javier Garau, ESCMID President*

In early December 2009, around 30 academic societies representing many fields including diabetes, cancer, and heart disease among others, met in Stockholm to lay the groundwork for a European federation of medical researchers.

The aim of the federation is to advocate for medical research and lobby the European Union and national politicians and policy-makers from a common viewpoint. Philip Halban, one of the founding members, stated, “No one speaks for medical research in Europe. We spend a huge amount of time thinking about science policy but not much time doing anything about it.”

The federation will represent medical associations in Brussels, rather than individual researchers and it will only tackle issues that are common to all associations and fields. It plans to focus on issues regarding research funding and policy, especially funding extensions of EU funding for promising research projects<sup>1</sup>. The federation also hopes to speak out on key political issues, such as swine flu and stem cell. Also, speaking with a unified voice will also help the federation have the political influence that its individual member organizations lack.

Ruxandra Draghia-Alki, Head of the health Directorate and the Research Department at the European Commission, was invited to attend the meeting. She told *Nature* that the Commission would find it helpful that the federation can give a “clear message” from researchers.

ESCMID supports this initiative and will keep its members updated on future developments.

1. **Gilbert, N. 2009.** Europe's medical researchers team up. *Nature online*. 22 December 2009, 1158.