

## Letter from the Chairman of the Scientific Programme

*Those of us who were fortunate enough (but unfortunately old enough) to experience the thrilling adventure of witnessing the birth of vascular surgery since its origin and to see it grow to become a separate speciality from general surgery, and to participate with our Masters, the giants and pioneers, in the creation of our specialty, can remember what a fascinating journey it was.*

*All this happened in the 60's but more experience, more enchanting adventures, other journeys for the most brave, most courageous and most open-minded among us were still to come - the endovascular journey.*

*The endovascular journey started some 20 years ago and fortunately has not yet ended. Some, new giants, new pioneers, conceived the idea, put it into practice and then started their journey with many companions, sharing with them their enthusiasm and talent.*

*The original concept rapidly expanded involving virtually all vascular territories and pathologies, among a thousand difficulties, rough waves and new obstacles to overcome. But this is the salt of life which puts the genius of mankind to the test. Should there be no more problems one day, the enthusiasm would cease, the genius would sink into oblivion and the journey would be ended.*

*So, let the endovascular journey continue, full of new achievements, emerging technologies and innovations. Let us face the ordeal as Ulysses did and overcome the difficulties together with our fellows and companions in our travels. Let's follow his example; let's abandon rivalries and turf battles and let's continue the journey together.*

*When we arrive we will probably be a little battered and worse for wear, we will be transformed by the Cyclops and Laistrygonians that we will have encountered in our path, but our journey will have been even more fascinating and full of emotions.*

*Along the way the events will enrich us and the vascular surgeon will eventually become a rare sort of species, which nevertheless will have to be protected.*

*A new figure will probably prevail, the **Interventional Vascular Specialist (IVS)**, not a vascular surgeon but certainly not an interventional radiologist nor an interventional cardiologist. These last two specialists will also have to depart and to set the sails for their Ithaka, and their journey will also be long.*

*The pure endovascular approach for the repair of vascular lesions will be a part of the main. A wide range of hybrid procedures will be more and more required and "pure vascular surgeons" as well as "pure interventional cardiologists or radiologists" will not suffice and inevitably will be destined to disappear.*