



Haran Burri

Letter of motivation for EHRA Presidency

Commitment, teamwork, and leadership

It is my pleasure to announce that I am running for the position of President-Elect. Having been on the EHRA Board since over a decade and served EHRA under five Presidents, I have gained the experience to undertake this important task. As a practising device implanter and interventional electrophysiologist, I also understand the importance of these procedures which are the core of our daily activity.

In the wake of the COVID crisis, our Association is facing challenges with budget constraints, regulatory hurdles and societal shifts which make it even more important than ever to make the right decisions to ensure that our EP community continues to thrive.

EHRA's activities are based upon five pillars. I would briefly like to outline my contributions to these pillars, as well as my vision for the future.

1. Education

Education and Certification are in my view one of our most important tasks, especially as the EHRA core curriculum is currently being updated. Our educational program endeavours to transfer knowledge amongst peers to promote high quality care to our patients.

As past member and chair of the EHRA Educational Committee, I have had the privilege of launching the Cardiac Pacing course in Vienna in 2013 which has helped >1'000 participants to prepare for our CIED certification exam. I continue enjoying contributing to the course every year. A new endeavour is the EHRA advanced CIED course which I will be launching in February 2023

to cover new devices, conduction system pacing and lead extraction. The EHRA consensus documents on CIED and on conduction system pacing implantation which I recently chaired provide standardization of these procedures and aim to improve success and safety. It has also been a pleasure editing the two volumes of EHRA books on CIED tracings and contributing to the EHRA book on interventional EP tracings, as well as participating in our webinars over the years. Our educational portfolio has recently been restructured and now also includes a course on leadership which replaces the DAS-CAM program to provide more focused content on management skills to an increased number of participants in order to prepare them for leadership roles.

In the face of competitive (and often free) education events organized by the industry and private entities, it is vital to our community to organise high-quality education which is independent of commercial bias. The industry remains a valuable partner within our educational framework, as their engineers provide technical talks in our courses, and some of their programmes are complementary to the ones we organize (e.g. using virtual-reality simulators).

Our EP and CIED certification exams provide a benchmark for accreditation with a worldwide reach through its online format, at a competitive price. The exams have evolved greatly over the years since they were introduced in 2006 (when I sat the first edition of the CIED exam myself ;-). It is of paramount importance to continue applying rigorous standards for question-writing and to test a level of knowledge which rewards those who pass the exam with an accreditation title that they can be proud of. National Societies in Europe and further afar should continue to be encouraged to adopt EHRA certification as a standard. As past-president of the Swiss Working Group of Pacing and Electrophysiology, I have been able to implement this in Switzerland, which now counts one of the highest rates of EHRA-accredited cardiologists, and hope that it will be possible to convince more countries to do the same.

We of course also need to provide information to educate our patients on their condition and the therapies that we offer and should continue to develop material to post on our patient webpages.

2. Congresses

The EHRA congress is our annual get-together which allows us to keep up with the latest developments in science and technology, to present our research, and to meet up in person with friends and colleagues. I have had the privilege of chairing EHRA2019 in Lisbon which was one of our most successful events, and appreciate the effort it takes to put together a programme

which caters to a variety of interests and needs, is creative, and provides a memorable experience. The Medtech rules and regulations which limit industry sponsoring have made it challenging for attendees to find support to participate in the meeting. This requires us to build a programme for which it is even more worthwhile to attend our congress.

We are fortunate in Europe to have many interesting cities which are potential venues and which should be further explored to diversify the location of our congress.

3. Advocacy

EHRA also has a political role to play in supporting our National Societies, defending our interests with policy makers and payers, as well as raising awareness of our activities with patients and the lay public.

Our diversity is our strength and I strongly believe that our different National Societies can each meaningfully contribute to our Association. Being born of Indian and Swiss/German parents, having been brought up in different countries in Asia, studied in the UK, undergone training in France, worked in Switzerland for the past 30 years, having a Brazilian wife, and travelling each year to a holiday home in Portugal, I am truly dedicated to diversity!

We also need to strengthen our ties with the other ESC Associations, with whom we share common interests and goals. We are of course all members of the ESC family but need to strive for *harmonization* rather than *homogenization* in order to defend our interests and keep our identity. Strong Associations contribute to a strong ESC!

4. Membership & Communities

Our members are the driving force of our Association and with >3'500 paying members worldwide, we are a large community that has the potential to continue growing. Having served on the ESC membership task force, I was part of the process which simplified membership across the ESC and its Associations. EHRA has much to offer to its members and at excellent value, which should continue to be advertised. We would of course very much like to have more young EPs on board, who are the future of EHRA, and more female colleagues, who are unfortunately still under-represented. EHRA can provide opportunities to catalyse the careers of these colleagues, who will nevertheless have to prove themselves capable and worthy. Discrimination is just as demeaning when it is positive as when it is negative...

5. Research & Publications

As a scientific society, the ESC and its Associations have a role to play in research and driving science forward. In addition to running registries and conducting surveys, our network of experienced physicians, scientists, and institutions capable of conducting high-quality research can promote scientific projects. The current economic situation unfortunately does not allow EHRA to directly fund studies, but the involvement of key opinion leaders can facilitate obtaining grants from different instances. I have the privilege of initiating the ABACUS study which randomizes persistent AF ablation in heart failure patients with a “pace and ablate” strategy using conduction system pacing. The idea for this study germinated within the EHRA Executive Board and will be conducted in 14 countries across Europe. Funding has been granted by the Swiss National Science Foundation so will come at no cost to EHRA or the ESC.

Europace is one of the leading journals in our domain and is attracting submissions worldwide. I have had the privilege of contributing >60 articles to our journal and have performed >200 peer reviews, usually within a day. The open-access policy which has been recently adopted poses a challenge to researchers to fund publication fees but is also an opportunity for dissemination of their work. Our journal is dynamic and continues to evolve to meet the needs and tastes of its readers by publishing articles which are not only at the cutting edge of science, but also close to clinical practise.


Concluding remarks

Those of you who have collaborated with me in the past know me to be hard-working and committed to what I do. I also very much believe in teamwork and collaborative efforts and am open to suggestions and constructive criticism, which result in better solutions.

I have sometimes been asked why I dedicate so much time and effort to EHRA, to which I reply that it is a privilege to work with the people who are involved (physicians as well as the Heart House team) and to be able to shape the future in our field and of our Association in a manner that I believe to be meaningful.

It would be a pleasure and an honour for me to continue to serve EHRA and its cause!

Yours Sincerely,



Haran Burri