Julio Celis looks forward to the EACR-22 congress and highlights the need for constructive partnerships to advance the Association’s aims.

It gives me great pleasure to write my first ‘Yearbook’ introduction having taken up the presidency of the Association at the close of the EACR-21 meeting in Oslo last summer.

I am looking forward to building on the successes of recent years and wish to thank Anne-Lise Børresen-Dale not only for her outstanding leadership of EACR as president but also for the successful realisation of her vision for EACR-21, a conference which received the highest praise from participants.

Just as EACR membership has almost doubled in recent years, so has attendance at the biennial EACR meeting: a meeting which attracts wide international participation and now fully justifies its billing as a congress. Participation in EACR-22 will grow again in Barcelona next year and I hope members will register early in order to avoid disappointment should the congress be oversubscribed. It is important that the Congress grows in order that we can offer an outstanding programme in an excellent environment, but it is also of equal importance that it is organised in a way that continues to support the friendly, supportive and powerful interaction between scientists at every stage of their careers as researchers.

The structure of the programme for Barcelona will be recognisable to those of you who attended EACR-21. The highly valued Educational Lectures and Meet the Expert sessions will again be part of the programme at the start of each day. Special attention will be given to the Poster Sessions and Poster Defence with every accepted poster on display throughout the congress. The range of symposia choices will be extensive and the Plenary talks among the many highlights of the congress.

Many members have already planned to attend the ‘European Multidisciplinary Cancer Congress’ in Stockholm – previously known to us all as the ECCO Congress. As a founder member of ECCO, EACR is an active partner in this congress and has had significant input into the programme, not least through the involvement of Anne-Lise Børresen-Dale as a Scientific Co-Chair and advice from members of the EACR Executive Committee. While members attending the congress will wish to review the entire programme, some highlights are included later (p.p. 22-25) that illustrate EACR involvement.

As you will have seen from recent e-bulletins, members enjoy a
A valuable discount on the registration fee and students are encouraged to attend with a low student rate available throughout the registration period. While an EACR meeting is not embedded within the congress, as is the case with ESMO and ESTRO, there is excellent science on offer for members and I am sure Stockholm will see increasing numbers of EACR members in attendance. We will be hosting a Members’ Lounge in Stockholm throughout the congress as well as having an information stand in the Exhibition Hall.

In January, the Executive Committee met to set out its Strategic Plan for the next two years. The Association’s overarching aim remains its commitment to advancing cancer research from basic research to prevention, treatment and care. To this end, the Association will aim to grow in influence through interaction with stakeholders involved in and supportive of cancer research. We aim to raise the profile of cancer research and cancer researchers in Europe and to emphasise the need for sustained political and economic support. We also aim to gain, value and support increasing numbers of members through services, activities, scientific meetings, fellowships and opportunities for communication.

These are demanding aims, and to realise them we intend to build influential partnerships with like-minded scientific organisations. The rapid growth in the number of affiliated National Member Societies, and educational collaboration with partners such as the Organisation of European Cancer Institutes (OECI) and the Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS), are examples of this objective beginning to be realised.

Our involvement with ECCO as a Founder Member is a key platform for advancing our aims and influencing policy development, as is the opportunity presented by the European Commission Funding Programme.

Important objectives include assisting members in coming together to collaborate on a personal and at a group level, and helping new national networks and societies develop. Other objectives target the development of scientific meetings and educational courses, complementing an increasingly successful EACR Congress and the ‘European Multidisciplinary Cancer Congress’.

Further objectives seek to maintain and extend the strong membership satisfaction ratings for the services and benefits provided to members including a re-vamped website, e-bulletins, travel fellowships, bursaries and awards.

The members of the EACR Executive Committee and I are always keen to receive members’ ideas for how the Association may effectively realise its aims. I hope that you will take the opportunity to write to us with suggestions or discuss them in person should the opportunity present itself at a meeting where we are represented throughout the year.

I hope you will enjoy browsing through the Yearbook and reading about some of the activities and experiences your membership supports. I wish you every success in your work to combat cancer in 2011 and hope to see you at EACR-22 in Barcelona next year.