



## ECCO–ESMO: a powerful partnership

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**B**ridging the bench-to-bedside gap and promoting multidisciplinary are pivotal to advancing research and improving patient treatment and care.

The implementation and measurable outcomes of both ideals in everyday practice generally translate into increased dialogue and debate between professional specialties and communities. In the battle to eliminate cancer much more can – and will – be done.

The recently announced collaboration between ECCO, the European CanCer Organisation, and ESMO, the European Society for Medical Oncology, was welcomed by the oncology community as a turning point in uniting forces, efforts and professionals across Europe.

ECCO exists to uphold the right of all European cancer patients to the best possible treatment and care and promote interaction between all organisations involved in cancer research, education, treatment and care. ESMO represents one of the specialties most concerned in such interaction, since medical oncology demands a scientific and academic base, a vision towards developing and evaluating novel treatment methodologies and an involvement in total cancer care.

To deliver on multidisciplinary and provide equal access to quality care, neither ECCO nor ESMO can stand alone. ESMO's decision to join ECCO represents a further step forward in shaping a united front – the convergence of

specialty organisations that share a determination to promote a coherent, concise and harmonised approach to tackling the second leading cause of death in Europe.

One critical outcome of the collaboration is that the two leading educational opportunities in European oncology, the ECCO and ESMO congresses, have been combined every other year. By fusing excellence and expertise to create all-encompassing comprehensive programmes of the highest calibre, the biennial joint multidisciplinary congresses are set to draw record attendances.

Setting the standard for the future, the first ECCO–ESMO congress will take place in Berlin, Germany, 20–24 September 2009. Thereafter they will take place on uneven-numbered years, while ESMO will continue to organise its standalone congress in even-numbered years.

Unlike many other fields, cancer incorporates multiple interrelated disciplines, which naturally poses a challenge. Efforts to strengthen policies on cancer will succeed only by standing united. Divided we will fail.

ESMO's membership of ECCO will be crucial in the campaign to build awareness of patients' needs and encourage progressive thinking in cancer policy, training and education at the EU level. The oncology community is now better positioned than ever to improve care and research interactivity across Europe.

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