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The 2019 Portuguese Congress of Cardiology: the XL Congress

The Portuguese Congress of Cardiology has for years been the most important event in cardiovascular medicine in Portugal.

This year sees the 40th edition of the Congress, which has led to some calling it the XL Congress.

But this Congress also commemorates two more major dates in the history of Portuguese cardiology. This year the Portuguese Society of Cardiology (SPC) celebrates 70 years of existence, which will of course be highlighted during the course of the 2019 Congress. And we also celebrate 50 years of coronary intensive care in Portugal, with a special session in this Congress devoted to the Arsénio Cordeiro Coronary Care Unit in Hospital de Santa Maria.

The Board of the SPC for 2017-2019 decided to establish a single Organizing Committee and a single Scientific Committee for the 2018 and 2019 Congresses.

It is now clear that this was a winning strategy. The demands made on all members of these two committees in having to serve for two years were compensated by the experience gained in running the 2018 Congress, which greatly facilitated the work of preparing for 2019.

The prestige earned by past Congresses comes above all from the quality of their scientific programmes, and we hope that this year's Congress will live up to participants' expectations. A total of 103 sessions over the three days of the meeting will cover all aspects of cardiology, from cardiac surgery to paediatric cardiology, as well as presentations from experts in other specialisms that are relevant to cardiovascular medicine.

The production by Portuguese contributors in terms of knowledge in cardiovascular medicine will have pride of place at this Congress. We have received 570 free communications and 125 case reports and images, the rejection rate for which was 30%, close to that of last year's Congress. The selection process involved evaluation by an extensive panel of experts, who we take this opportunity to thank for their work.

We continue the tradition of offering prizes for Best Oral Communication, Best Electronic Poster, Best Case Report, Best Image, and Young Investigator, and the Machado Macedo Prize, which will be awarded during the closing session.

Also as for previous Congresses, abstracts of all works accepted for presentation are published in this Supplement of the Portuguese Journal of Cardiology. For the first time this year, authors of free communications were requested to submit their abstracts in English, which should help raise the Congress's visibility abroad. Although this is optional, we were agreeably surprised by the high proportion (around 95%) of authors who complied.

The scientific content of the sessions will be enhanced by the participation of 30 distinguished foreign guests who will share their knowledge with us.

Successful initiatives from previous years will be continued, especially the Update Course in Cardiovascular Medicine, which is aimed principally at specialists in general and family medicine and internal medicine, but should also be of interest to other medical specialisms. This year the course will consist of seven modules and will take place in the largest hall of the Congress space, since we expect great demand for this initiative among participants.

As in 2018, this year's Congress will open its doors to the outside world, with Live Cases (sessions in which interventional cardiology and arrhythmology cases are transmitted live from the Vila Nova de Gaia/Espinho Hospital Centre) and some of the most important sessions from the Algarve Congress Centre being broadcast throughout the country and internationally.

However, the Congress is not solely about cutting-edge medicine. Continuous medical training remains an important part of our gathering, and ten pre-Congress courses will be available, with emphasis on hands-on activities and soft skills.

Over the course of these two years, many people have played a part in making the Portuguese Congress of Cardiology one of the leading scientific events in Portugal. We wish to convey our heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed to this success, from the participants and members of the SPC, to the companies who have helped with the many tasks involved in the logistics and organization of the Congress, and our partners in the pharmaceutical and medical device and equipment industries.

A particular word of thanks goes to the Board of the SPC for their unstinting support, as well as others in the SPC, notably members of the Training, Congress and Logistics Department, for their tireless dedication to the organization of the meeting.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express once again, on my behalf and on that of my colleague and friend Marco Costa (Chair of the 2018 Congress), our profound gratitude to all the members of the Organizing Com-

mittee and the Scientific Committee who have accompanied us on this journey.

We thank all those who have helped us to build the Congresses.

Daniel Ferreira
**Chair of the Organizing Committee and
the Scientific Committee, 2019 Congress**