



# NEWSLETTER

@ Newsletter from The **E**uropean **S**ociety of **C**ontraception

## Editorial

With only days to go until the 10th Congress in Prague (30 April to 3 May), life is busy here at the ESC. We have registered 2400 participants and we estimate to start the congress with 100 more. The highest attendance ever during an ESC Congress. The final programme looks very promising. Innovative programme tools such as the session for young scientists and the expert working groups will certainly have a positive effect.

The General Assembly (GA), held during the congress, will be an important business meeting for the paid up members for several reasons. You will find the agenda elsewhere in this Newsletter. Representation on the Board of Directors for each country will be decided by all paid-up ESC members of that country, irrespective of whether they belong to an affiliated society or are full members, at the time of the General Assembly.

The principle is quite simple: the number of paid up members of your country shall be used as a reference to determine the level of representation in the Board (1 representative for 10 paid-up members, and 2 representatives for 50 or more paid-up members). When the membership numbers from any country drop below the set level, the representation on the Board will be adjusted accordingly at the time of the next General Assembly.

The number of members at the time of the Congress shall be used as a reference to determine the level of representation. To enable you to follow easily the number of members from your country, we will publish a weekly update on the ESC website ([www.contraception-esc.com](http://www.contraception-esc.com), go to membership in the left navigation column and click on paid-up members). If you have not yet paid your 2008 membership fee (50 euro), please hurry and contact the Central Office in Brussels at [esccentraloffice@contraception-esc.com](mailto:esccentraloffice@contraception-esc.com)

Another historical issue to be decided by the General Assembly is the change of the name of our society. Looking at our activities, projects and areas of interest, it is clear that our society is dealing and interested in much more than contraception only (abortion, sexuality, education, STI, ...). It might therefore be considered to extend the current name of the society 'European Society of Contraception' to 'European Society of Contraception and Reproductive Health'. The abbreviation would remain 'ESC'. The Executive Committee and the Board of Directors are in agreement with the idea. As this issue requires a change of the Statutes, the proposal has been included in the agenda of the GA in Prague for the members to vote on. A 2/3 majority is needed. If ratified, the name change will have to be made official/public for official bodies by means of registering it in the respective French and Belgian State Gazette.

Hope to see you all during the congress!

Olga Loeber  
Editor-in-Chief ESC Newsletter  
ESC Secretary General

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## Index

Page 1  
Editorial

Page 2  
• Agenda of the General Assembly

Page 3  
• Romanian Seminar and its impact

Page 4  
• ESC support to humanitarian projects

Page 5  
• ESC events  
• ESC sessions during other meetings

Page 6  
• Web library on sexuality education

Page 7  
• Affiliation

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## Agenda of the General Assembly

**Friday, 2 May 2008 from 16:30 - 18:00, Prague Congress Centre, Prague, Czech Republic**

Paid up members who are unable to attend, may cast one proxy vote per person. Attending members with a proxy vote (special written document needed) should contact the ESC desk in the registration area at the time of the congress.

### The agenda will include the following:

- Welcome address (*D. Cibula*)
  - o Support towards local initiatives (*M. Lech*)
  - o ESC Workshop (*M. Lech*)
  - o ESC Sessions during other congresses (*D. Apter*)
  - o World Contraception Day (*O. Loeber*)
- Minutes of the last meeting (Istanbul 2006) (*O. Loeber*)
- Report by the Secretary (*O. Loeber*)
  - o Membership Report 2006, 2007 and interim report 2008
  - o Activity Report (meetings)
  - o Information on changed/new rules and policies
  - o Affiliated societies
  - o ESC awards
  - o Change of Society name
- Treasurer Report (*M. Lech*)
  - o Final report 2006 and 2007
  - o Final report Istanbul Congress
  - o Final report Bucharest Seminar
  - o Miscellaneous
  - o Election of two auditors (non board members)
- Science, education, and projects
  - o Internal Scientific Committee (*D. Apter*)
  - o Expert Groups (*D. Cibula*)
  - o Web library on sexual education (*O. Loeber*)
  - o Granted projects (*M. Lech*)
- Seminar (*M. Lech*)
  - o Bucharest Seminar 2007
  - o Seminar 2009
- Congress Report
  - o Prague, 10th congress (*D. Cibula*)
  - o The Hague, 11th Congress (*R. Beerthuisen/R. van Lunsen*)
  - o Bids for the 12th congress and voting (*O. Loeber*)
- ESC Publications and ESC promotion
  - o Journal Report (*J.J. Amy*)
  - o Newsletter (*O. Loeber*)
  - o Website (*R. Beerthuisen*)
- Items requested by members
- Board Elections (*D. Cibula and O. Loeber*)
  - o Procedure
  - o Elections
- Any other Business
- Date of next meeting

## Romanian Seminar and its impact

**The 9th ESC Seminar 'From abortion to contraception' was held in Bucharest, Romania, from 21 to 22 September 2007.**

*Iolanda Elena Blidaru, Seminar organiser, ESC Board Member*



The 9th Seminar of the European Society of Contraception in Romania was a wonderful opportunity to inform Romanians about the activities of the ESC, as well as making known the activities of Romanian doctors in the field of contraception, family planning and reproductive health care, to the ESC. Organising the Seminar "From Abortion to Contraception" in Bucharest was not an easy task.

It required the bringing together of people coming from different countries, from various institutions and from diverse backgrounds so that in the end there was a common language for everyone. However, the support of the Central Office, as well as that of some Romanian colleagues, made the event evolve very effectively.

Promoting the Seminar in Romania was a challenging task. I started the preparations about 1,5 years in advance, by outlining the scientific programme of the event and by contacting the invited speakers both in Romania and abroad. The staff at the Central Office of the ESC played a vital role in helping me with the organisation from the very beginning and continuously supported me. In particular, the collaboration of Medard Lech, Peter Erard and Ria Maes was very important to me. The Seminar took place at the Best Western Park Hotel and the gala dinner at the Military Museum Restaurant. About 80% of the participants considered these locations to be good and excellent.

The participants from different countries managed to find a common language because people communicated about similar ideas, which everyone uses on a daily basis. The potential linguistic barriers were sidelined by the fact that the official language of the seminar was English, which was spoken by most of the participants. There was simultaneous translation into Romanian and Russian because the majority of the participants were Romanian, (120 out a total of 455 from 42 countries) with the next largest group being from Russia (100 participants).

The Romanian participation had an obvious impact in the choice of the Seminar's theme which best described the dynamics of the local situation. The title was decided based on the dramatic Romanian situation regarding abortions in the 1990s, when abortions on request was the main method of family planning.

This made it necessary to introduce contraception, which was almost unknown because it had been forbidden in the previous period. Currently, contraception, family planning and reproductive health care have become very important in Romania, in particular amongst the young. They have very easily taken to these new methods, as opposed to older women, who still see abortion as the most important family planning method.

In this regard, it was interesting to see that there was a different perception amongst the Romanian participants – who still remember (many of us) the days when abortion was forbidden and many of our patients died – compared to that of the other European participants, who did not experience such dramatic events.

The abortion theme was discussed particularly by the Romanian participants, including medical abortion that is currently practiced in other European countries, but not in Romania as the required drugs are not yet available.

## Society News

The participation of foreign experts was welcome by their Romanian counterparts, since they presented certain practical aspects to their Romanian colleagues. Their presentations helped us realise what can be done or changed in Romania, to bring us more in line with what is happening in other, more advanced, countries. Furthermore, the Seminar highlighted the usefulness of certain contraceptive methods that are currently not available in Romania, such as implants, vaginal rings, patches (transdermal contraception), as well as pharmacological possibilities of medical abortions. The Seminar developed, as is the case with any other international event, without the nationality of the participants affecting its progress.

As far as the results of the Seminar are concerned, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of Romanian doctors joining the ESC. Secondly, the visibility of the ESC has increased in Romania after the Seminar. Romanian doctors wish to participate in various upcoming ESC events and I have been personally asked about the ESC and its activities several times. Lastly, the take home messages have definitely been different for the Romanian doctors compared to participants from other countries. It's difficult for me to appreciate what the participants from other countries have learnt from this Seminar, but for the Romanian doctors there have been many new interesting discussions on sexual education and the possibilities of disseminating it, as well as about medical abortion and certain new contraceptive methods.

One undeniable consequence is that better and closer levels of cooperation between Romanian doctors and their counterparts from other countries are to be expected following the Seminar. The most exciting thing was that each of us met a lot of people, unknown until that time. We talked as if we had known each other for a long time, we had a lot of issues to talk about and in spite of the cultural, national or religious differences, everybody felt good and we were friends during those nice days of September.

## ESC support to humanitarian projects

### Introduction

In 2006, the ESC started to support humanitarian projects in Europe. ESC donated 5000 euro to the Bosnia and Herzegovina project of the organisation 'Save the Children'. In 2007, the ESC supported another project of the same organisation in Serbia.

### Save the Children

*Ljiljana Dosen, Save the Children Inclusive Education Programme Officer*

Save the Children is outraged that many of the world's children don't have access to basic services such as food, clean water, healthcare and education. We believe children have the right to live in a world where they have hope and opportunity. That's why we aim to deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives in the UK and world-wide.

A decade of conflict has left Serbia's education system severely disrupted. While primary school enrolment is quite high, there is also a high drop-out rate. There is virtually no state provision in mainstream education for children from disadvantaged and excluded groups or for children with disabilities. Up to 85 per cent of children with disabilities are excluded from any kind of education or development, and only one per cent have access to pre-school. Almost a third of Roma children in Serbia never enrol in primary school, and most of those who do, end up dropping out.

*"School is important. It's important for life. If you go to school, then you can find a job and work. When I leave school I'd like to be a nurse."*  
Armadina, 11, Roma inclusive education project.

With the generosity of our valued supporters, such as the European Society of Contraception, Save the Children is working to improve access to quality pre-school and primary education for all children in Serbia. We have pioneered successful models of inclusive education for both Roma and disabled children in Subotica in northern Serbia. We have also supported the development of connected social care and health services, all of which are now sustained by the local Government and communities.

Throughout Serbia we have supported the establishment of eight after-school clubs and 10 children's community centres, all equipped with toys, games and computers to give children the broadest possible base for learning. These centres are open to all children regardless of disability or ethnicity.

We have also helped set up 23 toy libraries across the country, giving children in different communities the chance to learn together through play. We are now working to replicate this good practice example throughout Serbia's primary education system, and we are supporting the setting up of a further 16 toy libraries.



Alongside teachers, parents and education authorities we are promoting the integration and inclusion of disadvantaged children into mainstream society. We are currently lobbying for the national introduc-

tion of an inclusion measurement in schools. This tool will enable schools and education authorities to address the exclusion of particular groups of children and to allocate the necessary resources to make schooling accessible for all children in Serbia.

### *Luka's Story*

Luka has physical and mental disabilities. He enjoys going to the toy library where he has made friends to play with. "I like to come here a lot. My favourite thing in the library is the puppets. I like the animals. I have lots of friends. We like to play with different toys."

Save the Children helped to found Subotica's toy library in 2000 as a response to widespread discrimination against disabled children and their families. It provides a play space for disabled children and specialist support for disabled children and their parents. Its voluntary staff includes speech therapists and child psychologists, as well as parents, who have formed their own support networks. The library is successfully bridging the gap between specialist and mainstream education with strong links with local kindergartens and pre-school projects. "This is the only place for disabled children. Before this most children with disabilities were invisible because their parents were ashamed of them... The ministry of social welfare recognised that the concept of the toy library is among the best work Save the Children has done in Serbia."

For more information about Save the Children, visit our website: [www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)

### *ESC events*

#### **10th ESC Seminar**

Belgrade, Serbia  
18 and 19 September 2009

#### **11th ESC Congress**

Culture, Communication and Contraception  
The Hague, The Netherlands  
19 to 22 May 2010

### *ESC sessions during other meetings:*

#### **Clinical Conference 'Reproductive Health 2008' of the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals**

(Washington, 17 to 20 September 2008)

#### **FIAPAC Congress**

(Berlin, 24 - 25 October 2008)

#### **FIGO 2009 Congress**

(Cape Town, South Africa, 4 to 9 October 2009)

## WEB LIBRARY ON SEXUALITY EDUCATION



Dear Sir or Madam,

We could use all the support we can get from you to further spread the news that there is a web library on sexuality education.  
(<http://www.contraception-esc.com/weblibrary/index.htm>)



In many countries there is still little experience and knowledge in this field and limited access to resources. By developing a web library with a variety of background material and tools we hope to make a contribution towards better sexual and reproductive health worldwide, and aid those who are involved in sexuality education through their work.

1) We would be very grateful if you could provide us with addresses of educators and/or organizations in the field of sexuality education in your country.



2) Please inform us who is responsible for providing sexuality education in your country (in schools, in organizations,...).

Please send your information by email :  
[library@contraception-esc.com](mailto:library@contraception-esc.com)



In case you have contacts who may benefit from the information published in the web library, please forward the link to them.



The aim of this web library is to provide background information and educational tools to professionals working in the field of sexual health promotion. It is designed to support best practice and contains a variety of international resources.

The Expert group on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Education is in charge of the creation of this library. Requests and contributions can be sent to: ESC Central Office

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## Affiliation

### Introduction

About a year ago, we presented the European Society of Contraception to a large number of national societies. Indeed, one of the aims of the ESC is to strengthen the communication with the national and international societies and organisations dealing with contraception, family planning, sexual education and reproductive health care. Having a common interest, be it on European or national level, we are convinced that this network will offer many positive opportunities.

International or national organisations with similar or related aims may apply for affiliation to the ESC. Affiliation means that the members (or at least a significant part) of a national society become members of the ESC. They profit from a membership fee reduction and have exactly the same advantages as the other ESC members (including voting rights during the General Assembly). Apart from some practicalities, there are no special obligations for the national society. Currently, three societies accepted the offer to affiliate. We asked them to present themselves in this Newsletter. Other societies are considering whether to affiliate as well. If you would represent a national society or other organisation, feel free to contact us for further information at [esccentraloffice@contraception-esc.com](mailto:esccentraloffice@contraception-esc.com).

### The Israeli Society of Contraception & Sexual Health (ISCS)



*Prof. Seidman  
President of the ISCS*

The Israeli Society of Contraception & Sexual Health (ISCS) was established in 2001 and has been very active since in promoting the use of efficient and safe contraception. The two founders of ISCS, Prof. Daniel Seidman and Dr. Arie Yeshiya, currently serve as the Chairman and Secretary, respectively.

Israel's 7.1 million population has unique contraceptive needs stemming from the fact that 76% are Jewish and 18% Muslims. Jewish religious law allows contraception only in certain circumstances. The couple is expected to first fulfill their basic obligation to bear children before consulting their rabbi in regard to the preferred contraceptive method (J Midwifery Women's Health 2008;53:62). The choice of birth

control, once permitted, would require a method that does not interfere with the natural sexual act, which may cause "destruction of seed." This prohibits extravaginal ejaculation, such as the withdrawal method of natural family planning. Condom use is generally prohibited. This is in accordance with the biblical prohibition against the release of sperm in an unnatural manner that would prevent the sperm from entering the uterus (Genesis 38:9-10). Hormonal methods and IUDs are generally the most advisable. Sterilisation is allowed only when there is a clear and severe risk to the woman's health if she conceives. Although the majority of Jews in Israel do not strictly follow religious law, it seems that the very prevalent use of hormonal contraception and IUDs in Israel is in line with these Jewish customs.

A survey regarding contraception and family planning among Muslim women in Arab villages of Israel showed that only 6.9% were currently taking contraceptive pills; 60.8% used an IUD; and 11.2% had tubal ligation, most of them during a Caesarian section (Harefuah 2003;142:822).

Israel is a melting pot of millions of immigrants that have come to the country over its 60 years of existence. This has also influenced contraceptive use in the country. For instance, women who emigrated from Eastern European countries, like Russia and Romania, are usually less likely to adopt hormonal methods.

The ISCS holds a yearly national conference and three professional workshops. A special annual "residents' day" has received much acclaim, as it fills a gap in the education of Ob/Gyn residents, who receive little formal education on contraception during their university hospital based training. ISCS expert committees have prepared four guideline publications on: Combined hormonal contraceptives; IUDs; Emergency contraceptives; and 1st and 2nd trimester induced abortion; which were officially adopted by the Israeli Association of Obstetrics & Gynecology. The ISCS has also prepared an educational kit on contraception and STDs, containing a PowerPoint presentation, a written guidebook and a videotape, that is targeted towards high school students and is widely distributed between physicians and other health care professionals. ISCS is also encouraging medical research and has recently sponsored a study on extended regimens of hormonal contraceptive pills and is currently promoting a new study on reasons for discontinuation of contraceptive pills.

Further information on ISCS can be obtained from Prof. Danny Seidman at: [dseidman@tau.ac.il](mailto:dseidman@tau.ac.il)

## *The Spanish Society of Contraception (SEC)*



*Prof. Perez Campos,  
President of the SEC*

The Spanish Society of Contraception (SEC) is a not-for-profit, scientific and social association that brings together professionals of different professions with higher degrees (general practitioners, gynaecologists, psychologists, sexologists, etc...) whose professional scientific activity or social interest is in the area of sexual and reproductive health of the Spanish population, with a particular focus on contraception. Its objective is scientific knowledge and the promotion of the study of all the contraceptive methods in relation to the scientific evidence. Its scope is also the promotion of contraceptive methods among the Spanish population.

In order to reach these objectives, and through their Assembly and Board of Directors and in collaboration with other organisations interested in their aims, SEC organises courses, congresses, expert meetings, consensus conferences, study forums on different contraceptive methods, book publications, articles, manuals or information leaflets, presence in the new information technology media, diffusion through the mass media, contacts with government and whichever activities are considered useful in pursuing their aims. At present, SEC, organised in a federal way which reflects the multi-national character of the Spanish state, has 472 members and is governed by a Board of Directors, made up of:

President: Ezequiel Pérez Campos  
Vice-president: M<sup>a</sup> Ángeles Gómez Martínez  
Secretary: Esther de la Viuda  
Assistant Secretary: Macarena Quesada  
Treasurer: Roberto Lertxundi Barañano  
Assistant Treasurer: Jose Vicente González Navarro  
Members: M<sup>a</sup> Jesús Alonso Llamazares  
Eduardo Yáñez González

Its clear universal aim encourages its close contact with the ESC and the Latin American organisations with common objectives.

Further information: [sec@sec.es](mailto:sec@sec.es)

## *The Italian Society of Contraception (SIC)*



*Prof. Volpe  
President of the SIC*

It is a pleasure to introduce the S.I.C. (Italian Society of Contraception), that was born on July 16th 2004 and of which I have the honour of being the first President and to have Prof. G. Benagiano and Prof. P.G. Crosignani as Honorary Presidents.

Prof. G.B. Melis and Prof. G. Scarselli, as Vice-Presidents, Prof. C. Nappi as treasurer, and Dott. P. Rita as secretary support me in this role. The S.I.C. has the objective to spread and stimulate knowledge of a woman's reproductive cycle with the specific task to promote research in contraception, menopause and fertility.

As well as scientific activity – culturally, S.I.C. wants to be the point of reference for the public at large and for those who work in our areas of interest and wishes to fill a void in the culture of contraception of our country, especially amongst the young. Despite being around for only a few years, S.I.C. has become the most authoritative source of information for people interested in contraception in Italy.

There have been various initiatives at a national level including the newspaper "S.I.C. Donna News", as well as promotion of the website [www.sicontraccezione.it](http://www.sicontraccezione.it) of the culture of contraception all around Italy.

At European level we had the pleasure and honour to affiliate to the European Society of Contraception (ESC), to test the increasing importance of the Italian Scientific work in this area and of the international of Our Society. We trust that the S.I.C., in the next future, can contribute to interact with other European Societies to increase our experience.

Best regard  
Annibale Volpe

**All materials to be included in the ESC Newsletter should be submitted (electronically) to the:**

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All Newsletters are also to be found on the website of the Society: [www.contraception-esc.com](http://www.contraception-esc.com) (go to 'News')

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