TO:
President, Milan Macek
Board of Directors and members of the ESHG,
Presidents of the EU Geneticists Associations

Dear Presidents,
Dear Colleagues and Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Hellenic Association of Medical Genetics our greetings and our best wishes for success in your meeting.

It is really important that the Specialty of Clinical Genetics is suggested to be recognized officially in the EU countries. However, the unilateral establishment of Clinical specialties without the parallel establishment of the Laboratory Genetics is not consistent with the scientific requirements and creates educational contradictions. Even more, the fact that the results of the genetic analysis are the key element in basic genetic research and genetic services, magnify existing problems.

The linkage of these issues with the professional and business issues makes the whole situation far more complex. The proper scientific / educational and professional ethics require the simultaneous establishment of all three specialties, Laboratory Genetics, Clinical Genetics and Genetic Counselling. To our opinion, this policy and practice is important to be emphasized by the ESHG because ESHG is a society covering geneticists coming from very different countries and cultures. Ultimately, EU Council will be responsible for encouraging only one specialty and not ESHG. As we formulated in 2009, the unilateral recognition of any of the 3 specialties of genetics services will create problems especially in countries lacking the institutional framework, such as Greece.

In order to understand the magnitude of the problem, we performed a survey regarding the composition of the genetic services staff. We therefore have the
outcome of an initial record of the Scientific and Medical Staff in 30 Laboratories and Medical Centers (University Hospitals, Public Hospitals, Research Centers, Private Diagnostic Centers) that provide genetics services in public and private sector. More than 85% of the staff are mostly biologists and biochemists, i.e. non-Med Scientists, who staff and/or direct the vast majority of laboratories. A similar mapping applies to the Genetics Laboratories of the Medical Schools of our country.

Despite the fact that the vast majority of members of our Association are primarily Biologists, however, we continue to support the persistence of an open scientific and educational context for the provision of Genetics. We still support that the promotion and use of new knowledge and the safe provision of genetic services requires the establishment of three Genetic Specialties: Laboratory Genetics, Clinical Genetics and Genetic Counselling.

Based on these, we will work together with all our fellow countries, EU and nonEU-members, and the ESHG, which has the ability to unite our efforts towards our common goal: the promotion of Genetics for a better future of patients and their families.

Finally we, hereby, announce that we will organize the first Congress of Human Genetics in Greece in the spring of 2012, announcement of which will be sent to all members and associations in July 2011.

Yours sincerely,

The President                                               The General Secretary

P Kollia         D Yannoukakos
Ass. Professor         Director of Research
University of Athens       NCSR "Demokritos"