

# Priorities of New EULAR President

## More Recognition of the Burden of Musculoskeletal Diseases

**Maxime Dougados is Chief of the Department of Rheumatology at the Cochin Hospital in Paris as well as a teacher of rheumatology at the René Descartes University, Medicine Faculty PARIS V. He has been President Elect of EULAR since 2009, EULAR-ACR liaison person since 2007 and Vice President of ASAS (ASsessment of Ankylosing Spondylitis) since 2003. Maxime will come into office as new President of EULAR at the EULAR London Congress.**

**EULAR is an old institution, founded many years ago. How would you say EULAR has grown since and how do you see its purpose today?**

Concerning your comment related to the "old age" of EULAR, I would answer yes and no. Yes, you are right, EULAR has existed for more than 50 years and therefore can be considered as an "old" institution. No, because although EULAR has existed for this long, we have to recognise that the current structure and consequently dynamism of EULAR has dramatically improved during the past decade and, in particular, since the first scientific annual congress meeting in Nice in 2000.

**What plans do you have for your term of office?**

My priority is to try to maintain the excellent quality of the major EULAR initiatives in the fields of research, education and lobbying. Moreover, and at least as important, is to maintain the friendly atmosphere that exists within and between the different EULAR Steering, Standing and Scientific Committees. In addition, and if possible, I will try to improve the communication between EULAR committees and each national EULAR member society. In terms of educational tools, we are developing a EULAR slide library, in close collaboration with Hans Bijlsma, which will permit anyone to



**Incoming EULAR President Maxime Dougados**

download PowerPoint slides illustrating the diverse facets of the main musculoskeletal disorders. Finally, I would like also to try to improve the role of health professionals, and in particular nurses, in the management (education, monitoring) of chronic musculoskeletal disorders.

**What is the major difference in the role of patients nowadays compared to 10 years ago?**

It is amazing to see the recent importance of patients in the different ongoing EULAR initiatives. This has been facilitated by the fact that EULAR is not only a scientific society for rheumatologists but also an umbrella institution including doctors, patients

and health professionals. Currently, patients are invited to participate in studies/initiatives proposed by doctors and are also a part of the team in charge of such studies/initiatives from their elaboration to their implementation.

**How do you plan to further foster the relationship between the three pillars within EULAR?**

Again, the strength of EULAR in comparison to other scientific societies in rheumatology is based on the fact that doctors, health professionals and patients are full members of the EULAR Executive Committee. It is my opinion that transparency and application of simple procedures will further foster the relationship between these three pillars. For example, any planned initiative for any standing committee should be discussed **from the beginning** by these three groups. At the very least, any initiative should consider inviting a representative from these three pillars.

**How do you envisage to follow up on the recent major achievements of EULAR in the political arena in Brussels?**

One of the main objectives of EULAR is to improve the recognition of the burden of musculoskeletal disorders by the different national health care systems and, in particular, by the politicians working at European community level. In doing so, we aim to improve the daily life of rheumatic patients (e.g. support at work and access to public places etc) and also convince politicians to financially support basic, translational and clinical research in the field of rheumatology. For this purpose, we plan to continue, or even reinforce, all the initiatives which have started in this area. Personally, I am convinced that the expertise that we have now acquired in this domain will help us to reach our goals in the near future. ■