Having been president-elect for two years and having been president of the Belgian Society of Cardiology for one year as well, Professor Marc Claeys now starts the second year of his presidency. Earlier, he already gained experience as president in different working groups of the society, such as the Young Cardiologists and the Working Group on Acute Cardiology.

Prof. Lancellotti is warming up as president-elect to take over his role in 2019.

As host of the 37th Annual Congress of the Belgian Society of Cardiology, prof Claeys is pleased to give this interview as a welcome to all participants.

Professor Claeys did not lose his ambition in what he calls ‘pushing the evolution of cardiology in the right direction’. Indeed, the world of cardiology is not standing still and a lot of challenges are in front of us or are coming up. We need to tackle the challenges together, as a coherent group. Our aim is to practice modern cardiology. Like I said, this means essentially the broad implementation of the most recent guidelines based on evidence-based medicine. In cardiology, we have the advantage to have a lot of randomized control trials to support the therapeutic strategies which leads to contemporary guidelines that can be adapted whenever it is necessary.

Modern cardiology to tackle the challenges

One of the big challenges remains the fact that cardiovascular diseases are still the first cause of death in our western societies and even worldwide. Every cardiologist has therefore a great responsibility not only in practising the most modern and best therapies, but also in promoting the prevention of cardiovascular disease. A second challenge is the issue of the aging population. Modern cardiology is confronted with an increasing number of hospitalisations. More older people automatically means more cardiovascular diseases. How to follow-up and treat all these diseases is a difficult challenge and the health costs are enormous.

The best way to combat these challenging problems is to practice a modern cardiology. Like I said, this means using evidence-based medicine. In cardiology, we have the advantage to have a lot of randomized control trials to support the therapeutic strategies which leads to contemporary guidelines that can be adapted whenever it is necessary.
During the keynote session and also during the press conference afterwards on Thursday 8th February, Prof. Marc Claey’s will present the launch of The Belgian Heart Foundation: a new initiative of the Belgian Society of Cardiology. This foundation, as part of the BSC, aims to promote and facilitate cardiovascular research to improve the care, the quality and the life expectancy of cardial patients and this by means of prizes or grants for Belgian researchers in the field of cardiovascular medicine.

Why the BHF? Background and Mission
Cardiovascular diseases are still the number one killers in Belgium and Europe. Over the past decades, however, innovation and improved tailored preventive and curative therapy have resulted in a steady decline of mortality and cardiovascular morbidity. Despite these achievements, cardiac diseases still account for 1/5 of all deaths in Belgium, and 1/4 of hospital admissions. Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death and accounts for 1/5 of the available sources in the most effective way. This causes a lot of debate and potential frustrations. In our Keynote Session `Modern cardiology in the 21st century, today’s view. Dr. Mike Cobbers (Ziekenhuis UZ Gent) will give a lecture about hospital networking as a start of a new organisation for care delivery. This evolution will change the way cardiology is organised in our country.

Our relation with the health authorities is very important to be part of the decision-making. That’s why we recently presented our Vision Cardiology 2020. We are convinced that we are an optimal negotiating partner because the Belgian Society of Cardiology is not a professional organisation, which essentially defends the interests of his members, but an objective, non-political scientific organisation. Through the working groups, we represent all levels of the cardiology in Belgium and unite cardiologists, not only from the academic but also from the non-academic hospitals. As such, we represent the global cardiological community in Belgium so that we can speak for all cardiologists in our relation with the government. Over the past few years, we have been working to improve this broader participation by expanding our board to 25 members with more colleagues from peripheral centres.

Stimulation of scientific research and the Belgian Heart Foundation
The promotion and stimulation of scientific research is another key mission of the society. In this context we started up a new foundation, the Belgian Heart Foundation, which will be officially launched today during the press conference and which acts as an instrument to promote research by means of grants and prizes for Belgian researchers in the field of cardiovascular medicine.

Cardiologists with the Belgian nationality can propose a study project and after deliberation, a grant of 10,000 euro for a single-centre study and a grant of 15,000 euro for a multicentre study. Applications will be received by the end of June 2018. The decision will be announced in October 2018. The jury consists of the BSC board and an independent scientific committee.

A congress like this one is of course the place to be for cardiologists to meet, interact, and network. We try to make this congress more attractive by stimulating the interaction.

To that end, the working groups are moving closer involved in the organisation of the congress. Each working group has now its own symposium so they can accentuate their field of interest more specifically and improve their visibility.

An initiative to stimulate direct interaction with the experts is the speaker corner ‘Meet the experts’. After each presentation, the invited international guest speaker will be present during 20-30 minutes in a special corner close to the BSC booth to discuss with or respond to questions of a number of cardiologists who attended the meeting.

To end the congress in style we organise also for the first time a new test to know about modern cardiology in the so-called Clash of the Titans. Two teams, one the one hand the ‘wines’ (more mature cardiologists) and on the other hand the ‘beers’ (somewhat younger cardiologists) will compete and potentially gain points by answering questions related to the new guidelines. Different cases proposed by the working groups will be the subject of the battle. The team that hits the button first can score points while the public can also participate. This event will take place during the last session on Friday at 16:00.

Last but not least I also want to invite the participants to the seven satellite symposia (4 on Thursday and 3 on Friday; see table on page 3) supported by national and international sponsors. Over the past few years, we have been working to improve this broader participation by expanding our board to 25 members with more colleagues from peripheral centres.

Prizes and grants
The Belgian Heart Foundation is a part of the Belgian Society of Cardiology and will be managed by a board under leadership of the former president of the BSC (Agnes Paquet). The board consists of the nucleus members of the BSC (president, president-elect, former president, treasurer). The board is responsible for the organisation of the prizes/grants including the selection of projects/winners.

Following awards are already launched, but depending on the income/sponsorship, the number and the content of the prizes can still be augmented.

The Young Investigator Award (€5,000) and the Best Poster award (€1,000). There is also the research grant Doctor Leon Dumont Prize (1/2 of the total amount of €20,000) and the new BSC research grant.

This research grant is a new initiative of the BHF. It is an annual award to the persons or teams with the best proposed non-commercial research project in cardiovascular pathology. The amount is fixed to 10,000 euros for a single-centre project and 15,000 euros for a multicentre project.

The details of the BSC research grant are available on the BSC website https://www.bscardio.be, but worth noting is that the candidates for the grant need to have the Belgian nationality or have been employed for over 2 years in a Belgian university/institute or non-university hospital setting. The research should be original and to be carried out, at least for the most part, in one or more Belgian institutions.

Who can help?
We cannot achieve these goals without the financial support of individual persons or companies. That’s why the Belgian Heart Foundation targets both individual-related as company-related sponsorship. Major sponsorship (>$100,000) will be acknowledged. Individual citizens or companies can also support online, cardiologists will compile and potentially gain points by answering questions related to the new guidelines. Different cases proposed by the working groups will be the subject of the battle. The team that hits the button first can score points while the public can also participate. This event will take place during the last session on Friday at 16:00. So...no reason to leave the venue early, just stay to the end for this exciting battle! Read more on the last page of this BSC congress daily newspaper.

It’s also important to mention that for the first time this congress received accreditation by the UEMS (European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS) that controls the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME®) This makes it easier for foreign participants to acquire CME credit points and helps to convince them to come to Brussels.

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Who can help?
We cannot achieve these goals without the financial support of individual persons or companies. That’s why the Belgian Heart Foundation targets both individual-related as company-related sponsorship. Major sponsorship (> $100,000) will be acknowledged. Individual citizens or companies can also support online, cardiologists will compile and potentially gain points by answering questions related to the new guidelines. Different cases proposed by the working groups will be the subject of the battle. The team that hits the button first can score points while the public can also participate. This event will take place during the last session on Friday at 16:00. So...no reason to leave the venue early, just stay to the end for this exciting battle! Read more on the last page of this BSC congress daily newspaper.

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‘Last but not least I also want to invite the participants to the seven satellite symposia (4 on Thursday and 3 on Friday; see table on page 3) supported by national and international sponsors. Besides the usual sponsors, we have major sponsors and during which international experts, together with national speakers will present different contemporary and challenging cardiological topics. The presence of opinion leaders contributes to the international exposure of this congress and I think Brussels as capital of Europe merits a high-level cardiological congress with international recognition and participation. Enjoy the congress and keep on working on a modern cardiology!

Dr Liauen De Norre
**Awards & prizes during the 37th annual congress**

**DON’T MISS THE AWARDS CEREMONY: BSC BEST POSTER, YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD, LÉON DUMONT PRIZE, JACQUELINE BERNHEIM PRIZE, BSC RESEARCH GRANT ON FRIDAY 9TH FEBRUARY, END OF SESSION 14 (11H45-13H15)**

**BEST POSTER AWARD:**

Like each year, the BSC selects some abstracts which are considered excellent and contribute to the research in different cardiovascular fields. Spread over the two congress days, the best abstracts in each of the categories will be invited to present their work during the dedicated sessions of the BSC Working Groups. Eight abstracts will be chosen from all categories to take part in the Best Poster Competition during the congress. The 8 best abstracts will be presented in the Best Poster session on Thursday 8th February from 10h30-11h00 in the Margritte Foyer. The Best Poster award grant will be € 2000.

**YOUNG INVESTIGATOR AWARD:**

The 3 best abstracts from the submitted abstracts will be presented during the Young Investigator Award presentations on Friday at 11h00-11h45 in the Copper Hall. The winner will be chosen by a jury consisting of Patrizio Lancellotti (CHU Sart Tilman, Liège, BE) and Marie Christine Iliou (G. Pompidou Hospital Paris, FR). The best presenter will receive the YIA and a grant of € 6,500 during the Awards Ceremony.

**THE LÉON DUMONT PRIZE:**

The Doctor Léon Dumont Prize, established by The Belgian Society of Cardiology (BSC), is awarded every two years. The 2018 prize of € 40,000 will be awarded at the BSC annual scientific meeting on Friday 9th February during the award ceremony at the end of session 14. The prize can be won by European researchers in cardiovascular medicine who are under the age of 50 and the prize is awarded for clinical and experimental research projects.

The jury consisted this year of the BSC nucleus and some BSC Board Members. The laureate 2018 is prof. dr. Julie De Backer (UGent, BE) and she will present her project “Developing strategies for Precision Medicine in Heritable Thoracic Aortic Disease” during Session 15 (Dr. Léon Dumont prize and Jacqueline Bernheim prize laureate presentation) in the Silver Hall on Friday 9th February at 12h10.

**JACQUELINE BERNHEIM PRIZE:**

Every year, the Foundation for Cardiac Surgery (Fonds pour la Chirurgie Cardiaque - Fonds voor Hartchirurgie) awards the Jacqueline Bernheim Prize to a young researcher, for his or her completed fundamental or clinical research work in the field of Cardiology, Cardiovascular Surgery or Thoracic Organ Transplant. The candidates must be younger than 40 when submitting their work, and must belong to a Belgian University Institution. The prize money is set at € 25,000. The winner of 2017 (Philippe Bertrand - Ziekenhuis Oost-Limburg (ZOL), Genk, BE) will present his work during session 15 on Friday: Secondary mitral valve regurgitation: hemodynamic and numerical insights towards a patient-tailored approach (Dr. Léon Dumont prize and Jacqueline Bernheim prize laureate presentation).

**NEW! BASIC RESEARCH PRIZE**

On the occasion of the start of the Belgian Heart Foundation which is a new initiative of the BSC to promote cardiovascular research in order to improve the care, the quality and the life expectancy of cardiac patients, a new prize (the BSC research grant) will be awarded.

This Research grant of the Belgian Society of Cardiology is an annual award to the person or to the team with the best proposed non-commercial research project in cardiovascular pathology. The amount is fixed to 10,000 euros for a single center project and 15,000 euros for a multicenter project. The candidates for the grant must have the Belgian nationality or having been employed for over 2 years in a Belgian university/institute or non-university hospital setting.

More information concerning the grant is available on the BSC website https://www.bscardio.be.

Note that all of the abovementioned prices now fall under the new Belgian Heart Foundation (except the Jacqueline Bernheim Prize which is an initiative of the Foundation for Cardiac Surgery, independent from the BSC).

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**Be in close contact!**

**MEET THE EXPERTS... IN THE SPEAKER CORNER**

Stimulating the interaction between speakers and the public is one of the intentions of the organizing committee of this congress. Not only listening passively to international experts, but also meeting them actively and face to face will be possible at the SPEAKER CORNER during the MEET THE EXPERT moments. After their presentation, the international expert will go to the speaker corner and be available for discussion and/or questions from the participants of the session during 20-30 minutes. The idea is an easy accessible, small set-up in a special ‘meet the expert speaker corner and be available for discussion and/or questions from the participants of the session’. The experts’ speakers for the corner are:

**ON THURSDAY 8TH FEBRUARY**

- Sonia Petronio (University of Pisa, IT) at 10h30 after session 1: Cutting-edge percutaneous valve intervention (9h00 – 10h30).
- Stefan H. Hohaloscher (J.W. Goethe University, Frankfurt, DE) at 13h15 after session 5: Diagnosing and treatment of AF in the real world (11h45 – 13h15).
- Stefano Tedaldi (University of Pisa, IT) at 13h45 after session 7: Cold case: cardiovascular disease progression - who is responsible and how to treat? (11h45 – 13h45).
- Clemens Steinwender (Kepler University Hospital Linz, Austria) at 17h45 after session 8: Leadless Pacing (16h15 - 17h45).

**ON FRIDAY 9TH FEBRUARY**

- Stefan James (Uppsala University, SE) at 10h30 after session 11: Challenging the STEMI guidelines (09h00 – 10h30).
- Helmut Baumgartner (University of Muenster, DE) at 13h15 after session 14: BSC – ESC joint session on evidence-based medicine in cardiology: Quality assessment of cardiac care in Belgium (11h45 – 13h15).
- Markus Schwerzmann (Hospital Inselspital, Bern, CH) at 15h45 after session 16: Septal defects: mind the gap! (14h15 – 15h45).

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**The BSC Congress: THE ANNUAL HIGHLIGHT FOR BELGIAN CARDIOLOGISTS**

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At the end of this 2018 congress, there will be a new closing event at Friday starting at 16:00 called the ‘Clash of the titans – Beers versus Wines – enthusiasm versus wisdom’. President-elect Professor Patrizio Lancellotti (CHU Liège) gives us some insight and tries to make us curious to attend this session.

‘The Clash of the Titans will be an interactive engaging session with audience participation for all cardiologists addressing actual needs and possible gaps in knowledge. It will be a comprehensive educational session, putting forward the management of the patient according to current guidelines. But it also will be fun!’ emphasizes Dr Lancellotti.

‘Together with Professor Dr Bernard Cosyns (UZ Brussels) we will moderate this session which is set up as a sort of game. Two teams will compete which each other: the beers are a team of younger more enthusiastic cardiologists and the wines are a team of older more experienced cardiologists, which is of course… relative. There will be four players per team and the teams are formed in advance. The game will be judged by three judges: the president (Marc Claeys, UZ Antwerp), the past-president (Agnès Pasquet, UCL Brussels) and the past-past-president (Guy Van Camp, OLV Aalst).’

‘How does it work? Well, we start with a patient case. Each working group of the society has been asked to propose a patient case and together with prof. Cosyns we will select the cases that are prone to interesting questions or controversy. Any subject relating to the guidelines can be debated. The number of cases will depend of the available time.’

‘As moderators of this clash, we will first present a case and then ask three questions per case. After each question, the teams must react as quickly as possible by pushing a button. The team that pushes first answers the question and can gain points. But the other team can also get points when the first answer is not good enough or if they can give a better answer. For each question there will a score depending on the difficulty of the question. The first question (the most easy one) gets 100 points, the second question 300 points and the third most difficult question 500 points.’

‘The judges can intervene to animate the debate or even to stop the game, for instance … indicate that the teams have to follow the rules or should give the word to the audience because the audience too can participate in the debate. When the teams are not able to answer the question in an adequate way, the audience and the judges interact with each other. In the end the judges will deliberate about the teams by means of a voting system. So the team, the audience and the judges interact with each other. The audience can also give their judgment about the teams by means of a voting system. So the team, the audience and the judges interact with each other. In the end the judges will deliberate about the winner and also award an appropriate prize which will be a surprise (beer or wine…who knows?).’

‘The session is meant to be entertaining and funny in a way, but will be at the same time highly educational. Instead of the classical roundup of the congress, we offer now an entertaining and exciting end of this congress to look forward to. Don’t miss it!’