



ORganisation of PhD Education in Biomedicine and Health Sciences in the  
EUropean System

Dear ORPHEUS Members,

We have just concluded the ORPHEUS conference **Lost in translation? From medical studies to clinical research** in Cologne, and I think it was a very inspiring meeting. Debora Grosskopf-Kroiher did a fantastic job of organizing the meeting, and the programme was packed with stimulating and truly inspiring examples of not only Best Practice in Doctoral Training, but also many examples of how ORPHEUS can be used in developmental ways. A big thanks to Debora and all her team for a truly memorable event.

At the General Assembly in Cologne there was a significant change in the ORPHEUS Executive Committee (EC). The current terms of office ended for Gul Guner, Miroslav Cervinka, Chris van Schravendijk and Konstantin Gurevich as regular members, and of Paola Zanovello, Luis Martinez, Antonio Sousa Pereira, Sergo Tabari and Oksana Sulaieva as co-opted members (these will be discontinued according to the new ORPHEUS Statutes). I take this opportunity to thank all of them, on behalf of current and previous EC members with whom they have collaborated, for their loyal service to ORPHEUS during the past years and sincerely hope that they will continue to be active within ORPHEUS. **A new EC was elected** and as I have now taken on the formal role of President of our organization I welcome the new members to this important body.

A revised version of the **ORPHEUS statutes** was approved, the major differences being: the removal of the President being responsible *alone* for many issues (some can now be conducted by designated EC members as appropriate); the inclusion of the **PhD candidates** as an official part of the organization; as well as the inclusion of a **Liquidator** (Zdravko Lackovic) should the need arise to disband the organization.

Another approved document was the **'Best Practices for PhD Training'**, which is a revised version of our original 'ORPHEUS-AMSE-WMSE standards for PhD education in biomedicine and health sciences in Europe'. The major change in the revised document is the removal of all *'must'* orders in the text and replacement with *'recommendations.'* This should make the document more flexible and of wider interest, which is the reason for its improvement. A new PDF will be uploaded onto the ORPHEUS webpage after 1<sup>st</sup> April, up until which time you may provide feedback to Mike Mulvany if you so desire.

You will be able to see a major transformation of the ORPHEUS webpage, both in format and in content. We have a new webmaster, Ivan Liović, who is doing a fantastic

job. There are now links to the ORPHEUS **FaceBook** and **LinkedIn** sites, as well as a new edition that is a **Google mailing list**. I urge you all to sign up for this as it will form the basis of one of the many emailing lists we will use to communicate information within the organization. There is also now a drop-down menu **DOCUMENTS** under which you will find PDF files of many Best Practice documents that have been donated to the site. If you have similar documents or recruitment procedures, Individual Study Plans, evaluation questionnaires etc., anything that you think might be of inspirational nature to other ORPHEUS members, please email them to me at [Robert.Harris@ki.se](mailto:Robert.Harris@ki.se) and I will make sure that they are added to what I believe will be a document bank of great potential for sharing of Best Practices within our organization. You will also see a new pull-down menu **SELF EVALUATION** that details our new labeling procedure.

The **ORPHEUS labeling** itself still remains, The University of Bergen in Norway being the last institution to be recently approved, but the labeling board (also newly presented in the webpage) will now assist in conduct of a 4-stage self-evaluation procedure for academic institutions interested in assessing to what degree that they comply with the ORPHEUS Best Practices. Should national regulations prevent compliance with *all* items required to achieve an ORPHEUS label, an **ORPHEUS Evaluation Certificate** can be awarded as an alternative. The purpose of the evaluation exercise is to promote self-reflection in current doctoral training practices at academic institutions, and should thus be of interest to everyone. It is the journey and not necessarily the result that will be most meaningful, and that is why with the increased flexibility of the text in the Best Practices document, a larger number of our members should be in a position to make use of this opportunity provided by ORPHEUS. Applications should be submitted either to Mike Mulvany (Chairperson of the Labelling Board) or to me.

*Important event to reserve:*

The next ORPHEUS conference will be hosted during 4-6<sup>th</sup> May 2017 by the University of Klaepaida in Lithuania, so save the dates already. Information about this event will be posted on the webpage.

*What has been happening?*

During my President's report at the General Assembly I reported on a visit to the University of Winnipeg, Canada, to which I was invited by Ed Kroeger to discuss ORPHEUS with heads of Doctoral Training programmes at several Canadian institutions, as well as a forthcoming visit to the US organized by Joey Barnett during which I will meet American counterparts as well as representatives from FASEB and NIH. The potential spread of our Best Practices outside of the 'European System' might force us to reconsider the appropriateness of the expanded name of our organization (...in the EUROPEAN SYSTEM).

*Further activities:*

It is my ambition that training competencies within ORPHEUS are presented as an inventory on our webpage. This would mean that if a particular ORPHEUS institution

in a particular country is interested in organizing a workshop or symposium on a particular theme (e.g. ethics) then it should be easy to identify potential experts at our webpage that could be invited to be involved. If you have a particular expertise in this context and are willing to have your name added to the list, please let me know. The ambition is for there to be many more such ORPHEUS activities of this nature, but it is up to **you members** to make these events happen. At present we have a positive economy within ORPHEUS, and should you need economic assistance in making such a symposium possible, you can apply to the ORPHEUS EC who will review your request.

As I said in my last (and first) newsletter, an organization is only as strong as its members, so I encourage you all to consider how *you* can be part of this new development. We want ORPHEUS to be an organization that is **worth** being a member of, and this will only occur if we build academic worth into the organization. We have a great amount of knowledge and experience within the field of Doctoral Education within our organization, and facilitating the sharing of these best practices among our Members is now possible in several new ways.

Taking your professional responsibility includes payment of the ORPHEUS membership fee, and I encourage the many of you that have not yet done that (despite reminders) to kindly get it done. We can only plan funding for activities within ORPHEUS if we continue to generate an income through our lowly membership fee.

I am really inspired that ORPHEUS can **Make A Difference** to doctoral training, and I encourage you all to spread the word, recruit new members and get MAD yourselves.

I am always happy to receive feedback, suggestions and constructive criticism about any aspect of ORPHEUS, and encourage you to take direct contact with me via [Robert.Harris@ki.se](mailto:Robert.Harris@ki.se) whenever you wish to.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Bob Harris  
President of ORPHEUS

March 2016