

Presidential address opening the 20th Edition of the of European Angiology Days-International Vascular Medicine Yearly Academic Conference. 1-3 December 2023

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I have the pleasure to open the 20th Edition of European Angiology Days-International Vascular Medicine Yearly Academic Conference, web live, as adopted from some years. The event is a crucial moment for those who work in the vascular area and has also this year brought a significant contribution of knowledge and project planning at European and International level. A continuous growth, in quality, collaborations and concrete outcomes following the ethical lines and aims of VAS- European Independent Foundation in Angiology/Vascular Medicine.

I-20 Editions during 32 years of action from when we launched the European view of Angiology/Vascular Medicine, giving it strong contents for the first time and for the future.

As most of you well know, the embryo of VAS was born in 1991 in Milan, as European Working Group on Medical Angiology (EWGMA), to create a European vision for Education and Training, to enrich and exceed the different national offers in training as well in prevention and health assistance and to work for the recognition of the Specialty at EU level. In 1998, the WG, given its growth and the enlargement of its interests, is transformed into VAS (Independent Education and Research- European Organization-), a non-profit European Association and in 2018 VAS will become what it is now, a European Scientific Foundation (VAS-European Independent Foundation in Angiology/Vascular Medicine), enriched with a VAS International Consortium an agreement of collaboration among Scientific Societies, Universities, and International Organizations (Fig1).

We are proud of the job has been done to make possible what today we consider normal (European recognized education, UEMS Division, respect for A/VM as relevant part of the scientific and health system at Eu level) National and European efforts have been reciprocally enforcing during all this process. However, several tasks still need to be achieved and we are all ready to work on them.

I have been working from the beginning as Scientific Coordinator of EWGAVM and then of VAS, for the decision taken to work without formal positions. From July 2018 VAS become a scientific European Foundation. I had the **honour and the responsibility to be elected acting as** a first President.

The term honour is probably too much used, which could remove its true, relevant, and current value.

What “have an honour” means in VAS ?

Having the privilege and the responsibility to work for VAS principles: linking science to the real needs of patients and general population; Being independent from any economic , politic etc interests; Collaborating and bringing together energies with loyalty among the different Organizations and members of each project in a common effort for common purposes; Considering the need to make equity respected and concrete at all level, worldwide.

1-Contributing to create and to enforce a new view to approach problems, having our **scientific and social roles strictly connected.**

We live in a world with relevant differences, inequities, different health opportunities and quality of offer and of life. We are living in a world where the opportunities in education and training are not the same for all, also focusing on Medicine and on one specific area like vascular disease.

We live in a world that tickles personal vanity and also several times makes programmes following economic advantages or pressure.

These points have been and are present in any VAS action, to give our contribute for a better distribution of knowledge and health organization and offer, having independence, equity and the social benefit as central.

2- Combining values, ideas and concrete actions (with ambitious aims and successful results).

One of the VAS mottos is “Give legs to ideas”. None of the declared aims, projects, plans announced has been disregarded by VAS.

Sometimes the times are longer than they should be to complete a project, but we are working on it and we will improve with the help of all of you and of those who will come.

3- **“ One hand cannot tie a bundle”** mentioning a Central African proverb. No one can have the best competences/expertise and energies to achieve highest quality and results. Angiology/Vascular Medicine are the strongest expertise , the core of VAS but VAS has always considered that just different point of view and different expertise are able of enhancing the understanding of phenomena, the identification of focal points to which direct research, training, and awareness. For this reason, quite a few VAS Members cover different aspects of vascular knowledges, from basic to clinical, epidemiology, education or innovation.

Connection with other Organizations/Societies is considered fundamental, joining common energies, avoiding useless overlapping, creating stable collaborations, based on reciprocal respect and loyalty, focused on common aims to obtain common, joint, relevant results.

4- **Having open mind**, open to the new and future, respecting the past, conserve a style, values and working on today needs , but being constantly developing, improving, and up-dating and comparing with innovation and new perspectives and needs. Young people are column of the future directions.

5-Have an honour finally means **having the chance to work with splendid people**, people of real scientific and human special value, from all our Committees, Networks, Boards.

First at all the passionate Members of the VAS Board: M.P. Colgan IRL, E. Dimakakos GR, K. Farkas HU, B.

Fazeli IRN, G. Gerotziapas FR, M.Kozak SL, A.Liew IRL, P. Marschang AT, Z. Pecsvarady HU, S. Pillon-IT , M.

Prior IT, G. Scherthaner AT, M. Sprynger BE, A. Stanek PL, J.C Wautrecht BE and also:

Pavel Poredos SL, Dusan Suput SL, Paolo Gresele IT, Alex Blinc SL, Paul Wenberg USA, Endre Kolossvary HU,

Sergio de Marchi IT, Antonella Marcoccia IT, Sasha Marschang BE, Chris Manu UK, Malay Patel IND,

Jonathan Colledge AU, our “generous voluntary” Administrator Franco De Renzo IT and our hystorical

Secretary Elisabetta Grande.

At the end of this edition, I will have the great pleasure to announce we are changing Presidency and a great happiness to see the quality and the VAS “soul” in our next President Prof. Gerit Scherthaner from University of Vienna who will have all our support in making next steps on.

I’ll continue having the honour being part of VAS Foundation and, thanks to the Board, as Honorary President I’ll continue to cover the ongoing commitments and to give all the support I can. VAS, a tile for each, having the same goal in mind.

II- I have also to shortly remember the VAS main tasks, stressing the main ongoing steps.

I said before VAS always respect its announced projects and that we “give legs to ideas”.

Main columns of VAS are Education at 360 degrees, Awareness, Research, Prevention and Quality of care, Specialty recognition(Angiology/Vascular Medicine-synonymous).

Many were the results and changes brought by VAS on the European scene, obtaining the creation of the UEMS Division of Angiology, with the establishment of the CESMA-UEMS European Exam for EU Diploma, from the modification of the term Medical Angiology in favour of the definition of Angiology/Vascular medicine as synonymous used in different European countries, obtaining its respect as an European identity.

A strong European Educational proposal, with the VAS European Book, the European Master , Postgraduate Courses, EU Fellowships (both of Excellence and in Training) and the VAS International Academy with the Teaching Panel and the VAS European Referee Centres of Excellence. Stable collaboration all around Europe but also with USA, Australia and several countries in concrete projects and International Networks focused on specific Campaigns (www.vas-int.net), on research as well as on awareness.

III- Lastly, some words on the program of the 20th European Angiology Days- International Vascular Medicine Yearly Academic Conference

Following VAS lines, collaborations and contributions from different expertise also characterize European Angiology Days, both as personal and as Scientific Societies contributions, in Joint Sessions.

The 20th Edition was characterized by the participation as Speakers or as Chairpersons of about 90 European and International experts. Experts from over 20 European countries, from the USA, Australia, Canada, Singapore, Argentina, Iran, Nigeria were present. The topics ranged from basic research to clinical with innovative and original contributions, reviews, lectures and discussions on concrete projects in workshops.

First at all, the central Session Co-sponsored by the World Health Organization on Equity in prevention, early diagnosis, and access to treatment for vascular disease: first focus on PAD, is noteworthy for its contents and as relevant step of a long-standing evaluation process involving VAS.

Among the Joint Sessions, those of VAS with the: European Stroke Organization on Silent CVD and the diagnostic and preventive aspects of a possible stroke, Society of Vascular Medicine-USA- on the relevance of kidney diseases in the PAD, European Society for Microcirculation on the role of macro and microcirculation in Metabolic Syndrome, European Atherosclerosis Society on Calcific Plaques, mechanisms and relevance in peripheral circulation, European Society of Lymphology and the International Society of Lymphology on Unsolved clinical lymphology impressive cases.

In such a stimulating program, no less interesting were the other Sessions on ASA, platelets and Cancer, on new therapies in Systemic Vasculitis, on vascular diseases in Childrens, on Challenges in prevention and therapy in VTE, and finally on Thrombotic microangiopathy.

More project-focused aspects were presented and discussed in the two sessions/Workshops on News on VAS Education Programs (second Edition of the VAS European Book, New proposals for the European Postgraduate Course and the European Master, New Course on Vascular Ultrasounds, JCM VAS Collection on Vascular Medicine and other VAS publications..) and the one by the International Consortium on the ambitious project of The International Atlas on vascular clinical cases, launched by VAS in collaboration with SVM, ESL, ISL, ESO, VASCA that is now in an advanced definition phase and that will take-off in 2024.

By the VAS Young Executive, during their Session, the first, preliminary results of the Survey on the working condition of MD and Specialists of Vascular area has been presented, launching its extension (to join it <https://forms.gle/2mnPvWT4zSsoJ3Gm7>)

Abstracts sessions were of great interest, the oral of great quality and the Poster for the large participation, with some our technical organization limits to be solved in the next edition.

Finally, the VAS International Awards, 3rd Edition. The two Honorary Awards, the Prof Gustav Born for Research (endorsed also by the William Harvey Research Institute and the WH Foundation) and the Prof Klaus Breddin for Education. Winners of these third Editions were: for Research Prof. Alan Nurden FR-EU and for Education (Equal merit) Prof. Naomi Hamburg-Boston USA and Prof. Joseph Caprini Chicago-USA.

At the end of the EADays, the internal VAS Awards were given to several high qualified new Members of the VAS International Academy, to new VAS Referee Centers of Excellence and to new VAS European in Training Fellows.

What's the future? The experience of these last years gave the VAS Board and the Scientific Committee a new indication for the next Year:

-A new added yearly VAS appointment, to discuss in person concrete projects, will be on 21st-23rd March 2024, The European & International Laboratory on Vascular Medicine Projects. The appointment is planned as a small focus groups working meeting, open to participation for the ones interested.

-**21st Edition of the European Angiology Days International Vascular Medicine yearly Academic Conference** will take place on 29th November-1st December 2024, Web Live. Suggestions for topics of interest are very welcome (vas@unimi.it)

Both appointments will give more impact of the VAS the vision combining research, training, and clinics as it has always considered science at the service of society and social welfare. They will be shortly announced on the VAS web.

We all hope to enforce results on the large ongoing and new projects, improving high quality proposals for equity, education, awareness, and research in vascular medicine, extending cooperation and multidisciplinary contributes in a robust, friendly, and socially useful collaboration.

Fig1



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