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EDITORIAL

Introduction to the first ESHG/EJHG Anniversary issue

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This year, the European Society of Human Genetics (ESHG) celebrates its 50th anniversary. For this occasion, the European Human Genetics Conference has returned to Copenhagen, where the first ESHG meeting was held in 1967. Moreover, in January 2017 the issue 25-1 of the *European Journal of Human Genetics* (*EJHG*) was published. This means that in this very same 2017, the *EJHG* exists 25 years, also a memorable event!

The *EJHG* was started by my predecessor Giovanni Romeo in 1992. In the early days it was published by Karger and later it was taken over by the Nature Publishing Group, which last year merged with Springer into Springer Nature. In the first years, we rapidly went from four to six and eight to ultimately 12 monthly issues. As the official journal of the European Society of Human Genetics, but with a worldwide scope, we have seen the field of Human Genetics coming of age. Our philosophy has always been to publish 'all the news that fits'. This initially implied an emphasis on Mendelian Diseases and Syndromes, covering Clinical, Molecular and Cytogenetics and reporting on the rapidly advancing methodologies and fascinating findings. In addition, we have always had ample space for commentaries, viewpoints and policies relevant to all fields, as well as published *EJHG* supplements with guidelines and background documents generated by the ESHG's Public and Professional Policy Committee. We have witnessed the emergence of genomics, the initiation and completion of the Human Genome Project, one genome becoming many genomes, the surge of SNP markers resulting in high-impact GWAS studies, and the breakthrough of multifactorial genetics. This has not only made the study of common disease more tractable but also profoundly changed the study of rare disease. With it came a tremendous increase of the societal impact of our field, and today genetics plays a recognized major role in health policy making around the world.

To commemorate both the 50th Anniversary of the ESHG and the 25th Anniversary of the *EJHG*, we here present a special historical issue, which on one hand delves deep into the ESHG's past and on the other hand republishes a collection of noteworthy papers, originally published in the first two decades of our existence. We aim to revisit the earliest part of this period, as well as the more recent past, later this year or early next year. This issue starts with two historic contributions written by Peter Harper. One is a flashback to the Society's first – very different – 25-year episode, from 1967 to 1992, and the other one is the result of many personal interactions with many pioneers of Human Genetics in Europe. A hundred of first-time geneticists in Europe of the field have been interviewed by Peter over the last decades and he has made a selection of this for this special issue. We wish to note that, while the selection covers as many countries as are represented in his interview series, not all countries are covered, as we have only one Peter Harper. Indeed, to address this and extend the record of first-hand recollections, we shall be happy to hear of individuals who would be willing to interview additional first-time geneticists, notably in the countries not yet covered.

For the second phase of the ESHG, from 1992 till today, considering that this was truly a Europe-wide group effort, we have decided to consult a large body of key persons from this period, enlisting them to contribute their recollections and views on this episode, in which genetics has moved to the center stage in current health care. We aim to publish this 'ESHG phase 2' compilation in the fall of this year, as a second installment of the 'Anniversary papers'.

Wishing you good reading,

Gertjan van Ommen
Editor