Introduction from the President

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Dear Reader

It is with great pride that I write this introductory comment for our new United European Gastroenterology Journal. The Journal represents the confidence the UEG Council has for its future. It is a bold adventure but we are convinced and committed to its success. We are encouraged by the enthusiasm the professionalism and the experience of our publisher SAGE. We are delighted that our editor Jan Tack who has proven editorial skills and is one of the leading European researchers has taken up the challenge. He has chosen bright distinguished rising stars as associate editors Arthur Kaser, Oliver Pech and Tim Greten. The Council has promised unequivocal support for their journal.

There is a crowded market but there is room for this publication as it will be a show piece of our organisation. UEG is the voice of gastroenterology in Europe and beyond. We have a voice that must be heard but we also must listen to others particularly patients.

Only a handful of countries in Europe have a population based quality assured screening program for colorectal cancer even though the Council of Europe declared that this was a right of every European citizen over the age of 50 as far back as 2003. It is a shame that patients with inflammatory bowel disease have to wait for up to five years before a diagnosis is made and that many patients with the condition have to seek help through accident and emergency departments.

There have been significant improvements in the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease in the last few years but over 50% of patients fail to respond to treatment.

Helicobacter pylori infection accounts for over a million deaths globally a year. Three quarters of a million die from gastric cancer and a quarter of a million from complications of peptic ulcer disease. The world health organisation declared that *H.pylori* is a class one carcinogen but yet there is no public health study to look at the effect of screening on early detection and on mortality from gastric cancer in Europe. There are guidelines on who, how and when to treat this infection but these are not always put into practice.

I am convinced that the way out of the current economic difficulties is to invest into research and innovation. The funds allocated to health research needs to be increased both from national governments and the European Commission. It is important to mobilise support from politicians and patient groups to have our voice heard and listened to. The advent of our journal is a milestone in our development and shows we have come of age in our twenty first year since we were founded.

Professor Colm O'Morain
President