

## **Welcome to the Cambridge-Luton International conference on Mental Health.**

Again we have an eclectic mixture of presentations from different parts of Europe, as well as from all over the world.

We cover many aspects of mental health, neuroscience, and psychiatry, and our conference has now become well known for being a place where different crosscurrents of knowledge meet for the benefit of our patients. It is also a place where old friendships are renewed, and these friendships enable us to be aware of latest developments, so that we can ensure our treatment strategies are effective.

This year we have in large part adopted the structure of national symposia, and these have proved very popular in the small meeting we held at Clare College last year.

A very important part of the conference are the three international competitions for Trainees, PhD students and Medical students involved in research. This will take place on the third day of the conference, and the encouraging of new talent has become a key goal of this meeting.

We are extremely grateful to the University of Louvain which has subsidised the printing of the conference proceedings.

We are also delighted that the European Psychiatric Association has become a partner with us in the conference and we welcome their representative Olivier Andlauer.

I am very grateful to my colleagues on the Conference Committee, Prof Peter Jones, Dr Rashid Zaman, Dr Nadeen Mazi-Kotwal for all their help. Without it this conference would not be possible.

**Mark Agius, MD**  
*Clare College Cambridge, UK*

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This year again, our Congress characterises itself by its main virtue of eclecticism! This conference is unique for us in Europe, not only because we make it a point that different nations and universities, from West to East, and North to South, find a real forum for exchange, but also because its speakers come from fields as diverse as psychoanalytic psychotherapy and medical imaging. Although the contradictory debate feeds reflection, we would like to have the least possible power struggles between research teams and schools of thought. We trust the speakers and participants at this conference to make this place a place where none should fear that colleagues would steal ideas, but rather a place where we aspire that theoretical models sow each other without any, aiming at hegemony. No doubt that nobody can claim to achieve such a level of cooperation, but for us it is the main purpose of these meetings which have become annual. For those who have already participated in previous editions of this conference, we hope that you will find the same pleasure as us in meeting anew some colleagues, whom we come across only once a year, but with whom, we seem to have, over time, built up a link. To the new participants, we wish you to find here this type of relationships that makes this conference more rewarding than a congress where one goes just to deliver a communication. The link was built over time not only between colleagues, but also around certain themes that this conference allows us to resume from the point where we left them a year ago. Examples of these themes are bipolar disorders, psychosis, problems of diagnosis and early intervention in psychosis, and immunology. The persistence of such topics, year after year, shows that we are still far from their full and comprehensive understanding, and we expect that we will again have good and passionate discussions over them! Some other topics are essential because they constitute fields that are undergoing fast and tremendous evolutions, such as brain imaging or RTMs. If in the previous years, we have evoked some aspects of Social Psychiatry and Community Care, this year, a full symposium will be devoted to them. Finally, each university is proud to have young colleagues who will present their first posters. This session is for us much more than a mere competition; it is a door open to young people whom we will hopefully come across again as colleagues at our next 2014 congress!

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