

# EUROPEAN BOARD OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

## RECORD NUMBERS

### EBOD exam reflects European spirit of quality and collaboration

by Dermot McGrath in Paris

**T**hey came, they saw and most of them conquered. This year a record number of ophthalmology residents converged on the French capital in order to take part in the 2011 European Board of Ophthalmology Diploma (EBOD) examinations.

"We are delighted to announce that the 2011 EBOD has once again broken the record for the number of candidates sitting the exam. This year over 330 candidates from 25 European countries came to Paris to sit the EBO Diploma examinations, a figure which continues the steadily upward trend of recent years for this prestigious qualification," said Wagih Acimandos FRCS, FRCOphth, FEBO, president of the European Board of Ophthalmology (EBO).

Held every year in Paris, the EBOD examination is designed to assess the knowledge and clinical skills requisite to the delivery of a high standard of ophthalmic care both in hospitals and in independent clinical practices.

Congratulating the candidates on their achievements, Prof Acimandos said that it

was heartening to see an increasing number of candidates coming forward to sit the EBOD examination every year.

"This is a very important highlight in the calendar of the EBO year, because the EBO is all about attaining high levels of training and experience in ophthalmology across Europe. We are here to celebrate those that have attained that level and also to give credit to those who have contributed to them reaching that level by helping in their training and their teaching," he said.

In this respect, Prof Acimandos paid tribute to the 190 examiners who travelled from all over Europe to make up the panel of skilled, multilingual EBO examiners, all experts in their various fields.

"We are extremely grateful to all those examiners who give up their valuable time and make the effort to join us in Paris every year. It is a fitting example of the European spirit of quality and collaboration and we are deeply appreciative of their efforts to advance the cause of training and education in ophthalmology in Europe," he said.

As in previous years, the EBOD



Andrew Tatham, winner of the EBOD Overall Award for 2011, with runners-up Panagiotis Salvanos, Sonja Ute Heinzelmann, Marta Hovan, Cord Huchzermeyer, John Somner, Marko Sulak, Despoina Tsamadou and Meghana Anika Varde

examination comprises a multiple choice written exam (MCQ) as well as a four-part viva-voce exam, the latter seeing each candidate examined on the four key topics of ophthalmology by a team of examiners.

Candidates who succeed in passing the examination receive an EBO certificate and earn the right to use FEBO (Fellow of the European Board of Ophthalmology) once they have also completed a recognised training or are registered specialists in a European country.

Remarking on the increased number of candidates sitting the EBOD this year, Catherine Creuzot Garcher, Chair of the EBO Education Committee, said that it was encouraging to see that the concept of a European measure of quality in education and training was slowly but surely gaining

traction in member countries.

"Countries such as Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, The Netherlands, Slovenia and Switzerland have accepted the EBO exam as the equivalent to their own examination, which is something we would like to see spread to other countries as well. We would therefore urge national delegates and all the candidates who passed the examination in 2011 to further promote in their own countries the ongoing recognition of the EBO mission," she said.

Special awards were also presented this year to Christoph Raum from Germany, who received the 2011 Alan Ridgway Award of a certificate and a €1000 exchange grant for best MCQs result. Another grant of €1000 for Best Overall EBOD result went to Andrew Tatham from the UK.

## Prof Soubrane receives inaugural award

Described variously as an "institution," a "crusader for education and training" and a "staunch supporter of EBO values", Gisèle Soubrane MD, PhD, was honoured at this year's European Board of Ophthalmology (EBO) examination as the first recipient of the Peter Eustace Medal for her contribution to education in ophthalmology in Europe.

"It is hard to think of a more deserving person for the first Peter Eustace Medal than Prof Gisèle Soubrane," said Wagih Acimandos FRCS, FRCOphth, FEBO, president of the EBO. "Gisèle is a past-president of the EBO and her belief and support for this cause has been unwavering, continuous and indeed enormous," he said.

Prof Acimandos said that the Peter Eustace Medal had been established by the EBO as a token of appreciation of the tireless work of Prof Peter Eustace from Ireland who established the first EBO Diploma examination in Milan in 1995.

Paying tribute to Prof Soubrane, Prof Acimandos said that her own contribution

to European ophthalmology over many years had made her a worthy recipient of the Peter Eustace Medal.

"Prof Soubrane is professor of ophthalmology and Chair Emeritus at the University of Paris East-Creteil. Her training in France, as well as at the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins and the Institute of Ophthalmology in London, have resulted in a truly open-minded individual," he said.

Acknowledging her attributes as a researcher and scientist, Prof Acimandos said that Prof Soubrane's success also owes much to her vibrant and outgoing character.

"Prof Soubrane has always remained very level-headed and approachable and a true crusader for education and training. We must remind ourselves that while we now have to fight for men's rights, Gisèle managed to shine in a world that was at the time dominated by men. She has, and remains, a very strong proponent of women in ophthalmology," he said.

Speaking on behalf of Prof Peter Eustace,



L-R: Prof Peter Ringens, general secretary of EBO, Dr Marie Hickey-Dwyer, Prof Wagih Acimandos, president of EBO, Prof Gisèle Soubrane, recipient of the first Peter Eustace Medal, and Marko Hawlina, ex president of EBO

who was unable to attend the award ceremony in Paris, Dr Marie Hickey-Dwyer, honorary treasurer of the Irish College of Ophthalmologists, said that Prof Eustace was delighted to have his name associated with such a prestigious award.

She added that Prof Eustace, who served as consultant ophthalmic surgeon at the Mater Hospital for over 30 years with a special

interest in neuro-ophthalmology, believed passionately in the mission of the EBO.

"He recognised the excellent training ophthalmologists were receiving all over Europe and wanted to put a definitive mark on it for all of them which would be recognised throughout Europe and beyond," she said.