Introduction

This volume contains a selection of lectures presented at the 8th European Bridging Meeting in Gastroenterology that took place in Naples on November 23–25, 2006. The driving force of this series of meetings is the desire to create links and networks among academic institutions in East and West Europe, and to promote projects of mutual interest with the exchange of young investigators. As in former editions of the Bridging Meetings, experts provided updates on the various aspects of gastroenterology. The Bridging Meeting is traditionally associated with a postgraduate course, which in the 8th Edition was devoted to 'Controversies in Gastrointestinal Diseases' and included debates on the 'pros' and 'cons' of key issues.

This volume contains chapters related to important aspects of inflammatory diseases and neoplasias of the gastrointestinal tract, focusing on screening, prevention and treatment. The incidence of gastrointestinal cancers is on the increase. These are the most frequent cancers in westernized countries, and hence they have a heavy social and economic burden. In addition, data on emerging aspects, such as capsule endoscopy and the role of intestinal bacteria (gut microflora) are presented in this volume.

We sincerely hope that the contents of this volume reflect the enthusiasm that was generated at the meeting and will stimulate new projects and collaborations among academic institutions in Europe and around the world.

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