In August 2005, for the first time, the major scientific conference of medical informatics in Europe was held in Geneva. The SSIM-SGMI was hosting this event and the University Hospitals of Geneva was in charge of the local organization. This conference was the 19th occurrence of MIE, after numerous cities in Europe.

This event was a success for several reasons. First of all the number of participants was high with an attendance of more than 550 persons. The number of persons from Switzerland was particularly appreciated with some 80 participants, the highest rate of all countries, not really expected from a small European country. Second, the location of Uni-Mail at the University of Geneva was especially convenient, with large spaces and excellent facilities. Third, the scientific contributions were of excellent quality, including the tutorials, the workshops and the keynote speakers. Last but not least, the organizing team was extremely competent and able to master the numerous technical challenges relevant to such congresses, as well as preparing the accompanying conference events like a cruise on the lake of Geneva.

Swiss participation was also impressive at the level of the scientific papers submitted to this conference. The rate of acceptance of papers was fixed at 60% and several authors in this country reached this limit. This means that the SSIM-SGMI was simultaneously active as host of the congress and as an active scientific participant. For this reason, the present volume of SMI is entirely devoted to papers submitted at MIE2005. Seven papers have been selected as relevant of ongoing work in the domain of medical informatics in Switzerland. It is worth to notice that all these 7 papers went through a double reviewing process. First, they have been among the Swiss papers accepted at the MIE conference, and second, among them, they have been selected by the editorial board of the SMI to be published in this issue.

It is important for our country to be present at future scientific events, such as MIE2006 in Maastricht that will concentrate on medical informatics for aging societies, or the Special topic spring conference STC2006 in Timisoara, Romania, devoted to the integration of medical information. The search for new solutions involving informatics applied to health care is quite a universal problem. The dimension and complexity of this problem makes it out of reach of local or individual initiatives. Only the conjugated efforts of several teams, exchanging information across borders in Europe is able to bring substantial benefits on the long term. We have to remember that, as SSIM-SGMI members, we are automatically members of EFMI.

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Dear organizers of MIE 2005,
dear members of the SSMI

I want to thank Professor Antoine Geissbühler and all members of the organizing team in Geneva for the splendid work they did achieve!

This major event should remind us that scientific activities in Medical Informatics are crucial in order to have a basis for resolving real problems in healthcare. It is also the mission of the SSMI to transfer this knowledge into practice. Switzerland, at the heart of Europe, should realize that we are able to contribute on an international level to the development of healthcare. Thus, it could be a little step to also apply the results of MIE 2005 onto Swiss healthcare – shouldn’t we?

Many thanks again and best regards,

Martin Denz, President of the SSMI