



## A CRUCIAL MEETING FOR AN EVOLVING SPECIALTY

The 19<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Gerontology and Geriatrics will be held for the first time in Paris, from July 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Organised by the *Société Française de Gériatrie et Gérontologie* (the French society for geriatrics and gerontology in the name of the IAGG (International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics), the meeting will bring together, at the *Palais des Congrès*, over 6,000 participants from all around the world, with 91 countries being represented.

The headquarters of the IAGG will be transferred to France for the next four years and the new president will therefore be French, putting France at the heart of international gerontology.

This will have a definite impact on this evolving specialty, as evidenced by the increasing number of participants at international conferences and the wealth of communications.

This year, the theme of the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress will be **longevity, health and wealth**. Indeed, according to its President, Prof. Bernard Forette, society should not have to choose between living better or living longer but to **live better and longer**.

He highlights the significant change in the way ageing is perceived. It is no longer necessarily considered as a burden on society but as a benefit, related to increased disability-free life expectancy with good living conditions.

He feels that the vitality of this highly cross-disciplinary specialty is undeniably closely related to the profile of the baby-boomers, who nowadays behave as highly demanding care consumers and expect a lot from research, from the medical community and from all those professionals who strive to make sure that the population ages well.

Bernard Forette stresses that although a large part of the congress will be dedicated to the biology of ageing and to clinical research, this prestigious international meeting will also devote an important place to issues related to policy, the organisation of care, and health economics. Although 53% of the abstracts submitted deal with medicine and clinical geriatrics, 25% are devoted to sociology, policy and practice, 15% to psychology and behaviour, and 7% to basic research.

And for the President's conclusion: "This international meeting, which brings us together every 4 years, should mark a decisive turning point for our specialty which has taken so long to achieve recognition. It is of course a source of encouragement and optimism for this rich and vast specialty".