



Editorial

“What really goes on in Brussels?”

The European Union is correctly proud of the emphasis it places on health care, and the specific identification of cancer and cancer research as important contemporary issues for the 21st century. From time to time we hear of very large sums of money being assigned to cancer care and cancer research. Despite this, the complexity of accessing funds, for example from the Framework Programs has proved a considerable disincentive to many researchers throughout Europe. Knowing who is in charge, knowing how decisions are taken, knowing whom to approach for advice, are problems that confront many of us, and false starts can lead to disillusionment with the whole process. We believe that a greater understanding of who does what in the European Union (across the Council, Commission and Parliament), a greater understanding of how the 15 member states approach an understanding of one another on cancer and cancer-related issues, and a greater understanding of the distribution, and proces-

sing of the Framework Programs, would be of interest to our readership, and hopefully would encourage people to access the very considerable sums of money available. In this issue of the Journal, we start the first of a series of commentaries from an expert European health care journalist, Peter O'Donnell, who over a series of issues will help to explain these and related issues covering the organisation of the EU's Health Care policies, the relationship of these to the Commission's advisory groups, the licensing authorities and the pharmaceutical industry. We would be most interested to hear from readers their opinions about these commentaries, and to receive suggestions for related issues, which the readership would wish to be addressed. We hope that you will enjoy this fresh attempt to explain some of the complexities of the machinery in Brussels!

Professor John Smyth