

# Euromedlab News



## EUROMEDLAB Amsterdam 2007

17<sup>th</sup> IFCC-FESCC European Congress of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine

60<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Netherlands Society for Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine  
Amsterdam, RAI Congress Centre

3 - 7 June 2007

### WHAT IS IT EUROMEDLAB NEWS?

*Euromedlab News* is a periodical issue that reports on the developments of the scientific programme and of the organisation of the Congress;

*Euromedlab News* is a handy instrument to get in touch with Amsterdam and the forthcoming Congress in real time;

*Euromedlab News* will be sent to IFCC National Representatives, to all Officers involved in IFCC and NVKC, to IFCC Corporate Members and other Companies, and to everyone who has shown interest in the Congress;

*Euromedlab News* may be freely quoted in journals or newsletters and even photocopied, provided the editor (Euromedlab Amsterdam 2007 Organising Secretariat, Milan, Italy) is mentioned.

*Dear colleagues,*

*The theme chosen for this second Newsletter is "water". It is an essential element in the daily life in the Netherlands. Amsterdam as a city would lose much of its attraction without the canals. Were it not for our ingenious dikes, we would be swimming or skating most of the day. This time of the year we all hope for the so called Elfstedentocht, the greatest skating event in the Netherlands. Although global warming makes such an event less possible nowadays, skating is in our blood.*

*Also, in this newsletter we inform you about the poster-selection process. We will do everything possible to ensure a good quality of the posters. On the other hand, we see it as our duty to leave no open spaces at the poster boards and therefore, we try to ensure optimal occupancy. We ask your help in fulfilling this goal.*

*So, as you may notice, we are working hard to make Euromedlab 2007 a success. The Netherlands, and especially Amsterdam, are awaiting you in the first week of June 2007.*

*Gerard Sanders,  
President Organising Committee*

**Scientific Secretariat**  
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# W a a t t e r

#### SPOT NEWS

**Preliminary Programme:** to be published within *May 2006!*

**Registrations:** to be opened from *May/June 2006!*

**Hotels:** RAI Hotel Service can be contacted through [www.rai.nl/amsterdam](http://www.rai.nl/amsterdam)

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## **WATER: the Dutch struggle for life.**

Partly surrounded by the sea, criss-crossed by the mighty Rhine and Meuse rivers, we - the Dutch people - have a long history in trying to keep our feet dry. 25% of the Netherlands lies an average of 3.5 metres below sea level. Without dikes 2/3 of the country would regularly be flooded. All together these dikes have a total length of 17,000 kilometres. But sometimes dikes are not enough to withstand the battering of the seas and taming the waves proved to provide a better solution. This process started in 1927 with the building of the Afsluitdijk, a 30 km dam turning the Zuiderzee into a lake while connecting the provinces of North Holland and Friesland with a national highway on top of it. Part of the once flooded land was reclaimed by the creation of the Polders. Thus, the heart of the country was secured.

But in 1953, furious tidal waves struck the southern province of Zeeland. The resulting devastation killed almost 2000 people and

forced the evacuation of another 70,000, prompting the government to construct a flood defence system known as the *Delta Works*. Beach sand dunes were raised by as much as 5m and the islands in Zeeland were joined by a series of dams, most notably the Oosterscheldedam. This dam can be opened and closed to keep out the sea.

In the past decades three times the Rhine and Meuse rivers crossed their banks due to heavy rainfall and melt water from the Alps, causing enormous havoc and anxiety. To prevent repeats, the government implemented the Great Rivers Delta Plan. Next to simply reinforcing dikes to keep the rivers at bay, it was also decided to give the rivers adequate space: if no other options are available in the event of extremely high water levels, emergency flood areas function as a sort of insurance policy. With climate change and raising sea levels in prospect, the appeal on the ingenuity and skills of our water managers will remain.



## **No water, no Amsterdam!**

The sentence “*Water is as much a friend as an enemy of our country*” is especially true for Amsterdam. After all, it was the water that allowed tradesmen to transport goods from “A” to “B”, as much as it served to keep the enemy out by deliberately flooding large areas. From its origins in the 12th century, the city of Amsterdam could only develop because of the presence of water; moreover it was even depending on it for survival.

In the course of the 17th century the famous crescent shape of the city centre was realised, resulting in the unique ring of canals. A number of narrow streets and canals, fanning out from the centre of the crescent, traversed the network of concentric semicircular canals. On the outskirts of the city centre, the canals ended in squares, where the city gates were located. The squares were used as parking places, since vehicles were not always allowed into the city itself. This is why Amsterdam is also called the *Venice of the*

*North*, consisting of approx. 90 islands, separated by some 110 kilometres of canals and linked by more than 1000 bridges.

In the fifties of the last century some 'progressive' local politicians planned to fill in the canals, and indeed some of them have been. But a dam of protests turned the tide and now the city centre is even eligible for a place on the UNESCO World Heritage List!



## Experience the Canals



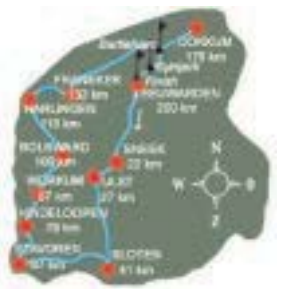
While you are in Amsterdam, don't miss the opportunity to enjoy a stroll along the canals. Have a drink or a bite in one of the numerous cafés that will meet your path. But the best way to explore Amsterdam's water heart is on the water itself. There are numerous opportunities to do so and be sure we'll show you them before and during Euromedlab 2007. One advice, though: a smaller vessel will bring you further inside and if you want to touch the water, feel it moving, and be close to the surface... peddling a canal bike all by yourself is the ultimate Amsterdam water experience!

## Skating in the Netherlands: the 'Dutch Disease'

Nowadays, natural ice in the Netherlands is a rare occurrence. In fact, some winters there's no natural ice at all. Maybe that explains why the Dutch love to skate outside: they hardly ever get a chance !!! But when a cold wave hits The Netherlands, and the interconnected maze of canals, rivers and lakes freeze over, a spontaneous celebration takes place. Starting as a poor man's sport (isolated by mud water in the damp winters, rural farmers prayed for ice giving them the opportunity to strap their wooden skates with leather thongs and visit friends and relatives they hadn't seen in months) these days people from all walks of life try to get their part of this opportunity: businesses close their doors and everyone who can skate goes skating.

Aside from the scenery, the joys of skating are the companionship of other skaters, and the food served along the canals in special for the occasion constructed refreshment stands, the so called '*koek-en-zopie*'. Among the delights are hot chocolate, hot dogs and the Dutch staple, pea soup ('erwtensop' or 'snert'). Perhaps the most anticipated skating tour of all is '*De Elfstedentocht*' (eleven cities tour), a megatour in the province of Friesland. The first official '*Elfstedentocht*' was held on January 2, 1909. Since 1909 the tour could be organized 15 times of which the last one took place

January 4, 1997. Still, whenever cold air descends on Friesland and ice covers the canals, the preparations begin. Because the tour hinges on weather conditions, lead-time is always short and the preparations furious. Wind chill, skating surfaces and ice thickness determine if and how the tour is run. The first experts that are mobilized perform 'ice transplants'. They shovel up truckloads of ice chunks and dump them into the canals in the trouble spots of the tour, where the ice is slow to form (e.g. underneath bridges or near industrial sites).



The 1997 race was organized with less than two days notice. The Dutch, and especially the Friesians, are very proud that they are able to organize such a big event within such a small period of time. Despite nearly impossible time constraints, an army of organizers and volunteers pull the race off and, with it, one of the greatest tests of athleticism. The night before the tour, trains run all night into Leeuwarden carrying the 16.000 lucky skaters that have a starting permit and hundreds of thousands of spectators that line the route shouting encouragements to the racers. The tour starts before sunrise forcing skaters to navigate their first three hours by the light of spectator torches and farmers' tractor lamps. In 1997, by 11 pm, those still skating were taken off the ice in order to prevent casualties.





# LIST OF SPONSORS

as of 31 January 2006

## PRINCIPAL



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## MAJOR



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SPONSORS

The companies enlisted above have already confirmed their participation in  
EUROMEDLAB Amsterdam 2007 .  
We wish to thank them and all the other companies that will support the Congress.  
Any information regarding sponsorship will be published on the web site of the congress  
[www.ams2007.org](http://www.ams2007.org)