

On June 3 2016, the presidency of IABS was passed over to me in agreement with the IABS election process. Above all, I thank John Petricciani for his exceptional leadership and wise advice. He steered the organisation through heavy waters and put into place a solid group of enthusiastic board members and officers. Thank you, John, for this major achievement, and for your continued support of IABS as honorary President and immediate Past President.

IABS went through a profound remodelling to assure its status as a nonprofit, independent and neutral interface between all stakeholders who are active in the field of biologicals. The challenges ahead are enormous. New technologies and innovation change our environment at an ever-increasing speed. Boundaries for new health solutions are pushed further almost every day. Pressure is high on science and regulatory to design correct science-based solutions and to assure, access, safety and efficacy of new biologicals for patients.

Dialogue, consultation and consensus building are needed now even more than ever before. IABS has an impressive track record for more than 60 years in consensus building leading to adapted regulatory frameworks on a variety of complicated issues. This was only possible because stakeholders from science, regulatory, and private and public sectors could rely on the total independence of IABS to organise an open dialogue that led to a better understanding of each others opinion, resulting in science-based solutions. Political decision makers and civil society are important partners in that process.

Personal medicine, cell and gene therapy, and one health issues like zoonoses and antimicrobials are the fields that require our particular attention.

Science and innovation are global activities, but regulatory processes and market approaches often differ between various regions of the world. To cope better with those specificities, IABS is in the process of creating affiliates. The first affiliate, IABS-EU for Europe, was created in 2014, followed by IABS-NA for North America, created in 2015.

I call on all stakeholders and particularly on the members of IABS to continue their input for IABS to contribute to the universal goal of even better health for humans and animals.

Joris Vandeputte  
President