Dear Colleagues,

The manuscripts in this issue of the European Journal for Cardio-thoracic Surgery were presented at the International Symposium on ‘Present State of Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery – Meet the Experts’, December 3–5, 1998, Dresden, Germany. The idea behind this Symposium was to attract experienced surgeons who are interested in the actual techniques in the field of minimally invasive cardiac surgery.

More than 150 cardiac surgeons, cardiologists, and company representatives from Europe and the US came to Dresden in December 1998 to attend this International Symposium. The meeting brought together an international group of 31 experts from Argentina, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, the UK, and the USA, demonstrating and discussing their experiences in the field of:

- Treatment of CAD – beating heart procedures
- Treatment of CAD – minimally invasive surgical techniques using CPB
- Treatment of valvular and congenital heart disease
- Future developments (robot assisted CABS and mitral valve surgery, solo surgery, research activities)

The Symposium focused on practical aspects presented by videos, data analysis, and a comprehensive trade exhibition of 18 companies showing innovative ideas in the field of minimally invasive cardiac surgery.

We hope that this actual overview on minimally invasive cardiac surgery will further stimulate your interest in this field.

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