



Annual Report 2007-2008

It is my pleasure to report on EBC's 2007-2008 major activities. Monthly reports have been posted on the website throughout the year and a special page has been dedicated to the monthly highlights.

These reports can be found at www.europeanbraincouncil.org

European Commission

DG Research:

In November 2007, the third Call of FP7 was under preparation. Jes Olesen and Mary Baker, President of EFNA, met with Commissioner Potocnik, EU Commissioner for Research, to express concerns about the support for brain research in FP7.

The Programme Committee of the EC has a decisive vote when allotting funding to various FP7 topics. Programme Committees are formed of experts from Member States, and representatives from associate countries. They play a formal role - they vote and have to agree on the Commission's management of programmes. National Programme Committee members have been contacted and made aware of the imminent need to implement funding for brain research. The role of the National Brain Councils in this process is crucial as national interests help influencing European decisions

DG SANCO

In June 2008, DG SANCO organised a high-level conference "Together for Mental Health and Wellbeing" in which EBC took part.

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EGE - European Group on Ethics and CHES – Coalition for Health Ethics and Society:

European research has to take into account the ethical aspects that brain research imply. Contacts have been made with Mr. Michael Rogers and the EGE. The Group is a neutral, independent, pluralist and multidisciplinary body, composed of fifteen experts appointed by the Commission for their expertise and personal qualities.

The task of the Group is to examine ethical questions arising from science and new technologies and on this basis to issue Opinions to the European Commission in connection with the preparation and implementation of Community legislation or policies.

More can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/european_group_ethics/index_en.htm and <http://www.epc.eu/en/iwp1.asp?TYP=TEWN&LV=187&see=y&PG=TEWN/EN/CHES&l=14>

European Parliament

STOA – Science Technology Options Assessment: Philippe Busquin, MEP for Belgium and Chair of the STOA Panel, invited Jes Olesen to deliver an “Expert Presentation” at the Annual STOA meeting (November 2007). The lecture addressed the topic “The importance of research for a better quality of life”. He shared the platform with Prof. Christine Van Broeckhoven (Belgium) and Professor Susan Greenfield (UK).

Monthly meetings of the STOA group take place at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. An official request to present at these meetings has been mailed to Mr. Busquin who has confirmed that the EBC will be able to do so.

More on STOA can be found at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/stoa/default_en.htm

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In order to ensure the active involvement of MEPs in the European and national policy, visits are paid to MEPs. In February 2008, Jes Olesen, Julien Mendlewicz, Mary Baker and Jose Vazquez met with Mrs Angelika Niebler, MEP for Germany and Chairwoman of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). This Committee is key to decisions related to research funding. On that occasion, a public hearing for the ITRE Committee has been requested. Such a hearing will allow informing the committee members on the need to increment funding for brain research. More on ITRE can be found at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/itre_home_en.htm

National Brain Councils (NBC) and National Action Groups (NAG).

It is with pleasure that we report on the growing number of NBC and NAG. Start up meetings for NBC's were held in Portugal, Cyprus, Germany, Malta, and Slovakia. The national neurological societies of these countries were key to this important work.

In February 2008, a first Annual Meeting of NBCs and NAGs took place. It was agreed to set up a network of national brain councils allowing fast spreading of news and the enhancement of joint activities at the European as well as on the national level.

The NBCs and NAGs have been very active in the dissemination and translation of national versions of the EBC publications. Executive summaries of the major publications have been translated in various EU languages and are available for use on the EBC website in: English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovakian, Slovenian, and Spanish.

These councils are very important with regard to the **dissemination** at the national level of all EBC publications and work. The interaction with the **national policy makers**, who then

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are elected to European positions, closes the loop of interacting at the national/European level.

David Vodusek and the Slovenian Brain Council published the Slovenian version of the Cost of Disorders of the Brain publication.

The number of **Associate Members** of EBC is steadily growing. Apart from **EACAP** (European Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry), **EFIC** (European Federation of IASP Chapters) and **FEPS/CNS** (Federation of European Psychophysiology and Cognitive Neuroscience Societies) have agreed to become Associate Members.

The application of **EACIC** (European Accreditation Committee in CNS) was also accepted. Requests for Associate Membership have been received from **ESN** (Federation of European Societies of Neuropsychology) and the **Brains4Brain** network.

Participation in major meetings

It is with great pleasure that EBC took part in several meetings of its member associations. Special sessions, workshops and discussion groups took place at the annual meetings of EFNS – European Federation of Neurological Societies, EPA – European Psychiatric Association, FENS – Federation of European Neuroscience Societies, EHA – European Headache Alliance European and the Migraine Day of Action. EBC also took part in the High-level Conference organised by DG SANCO.

European Brain Policy Forum

Beginning in 2008 the EBC launched a series of **Annual Multidisciplinary Forums** designed to involve all those with a stake in brain research in the building of a European research strategy towards tackling the major brain diseases. A major goal of each BPF will be to raise awareness of the research and resource requirements for making further progress in understanding that disease.

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Each multidisciplinary forum will focus on one major disease and in particular, neglected areas of that disease. The first multidisciplinary forum that took place in Brussels on February 27 and 28, **2008**, was devoted to **Parkinson's disease and the European Society**. The 2008 EBPF saw the participation of 200 delegates from most EU countries. A full report of the First EBPF can be found on the website at: <http://www.europeanbraincouncil.org/projects/EBPF%202008.htm>

The **2009** EBPF will address **Depression and the European Society**. The program for the event is in place and most speakers have accepted to take part in the event. The programme and further information on the second EBPF can be found at <http://www.kenes.com/ebpf2008/welcome.asp>

Position Papers

In the overall interest of its member societies, EBC decided to become a member of the following associations:

European Alliance for Access to Safe Medicines - EAASM),

European Coalition for Biomedical Research, ECBR (www.ecbr.eu)

In order to sustain the work of these organisations, position papers subscribed to by all the EBC member societies will be written and posted on the website. The position paper supporting the "*Revision of the European Directive 86/609 on the protection of animals used for experimental and other scientific purposes*" can be found at the "publication" page of the EBC website and reports of the activities of the EAASM on the "Neuropolitical Bibliography" section.

Other Projects

EBC, together with EFNA, is closely involved in the project "**Accelerated Access to Treatment**". The project brings together academia, industry, and the EC, EMEA and

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patient organisations. Two workshops were organised, Prof. W. Oertel and Jes Olesen took part in the first workshop, Ian Ragan and Mary Baker attended the second workshop.. The aim of the project is the review the process of the clinical trials, to shorten the time of phase three and to make new drugs faster available to patients.

Cost and Utilities of Brain diseases in Europe: The follow-up study called “CUBE”. The purpose of the CUBE study (Costs and Utilities of Brain disorders in Europe) is therefore to estimate the costs of brain disorders in Europe by using an observational approach, collecting patient-level data on resource use and productivity loss due to disease. The aim of this study is to estimate more accurately the costs of brain disorders in Europe for those disorders that were not included in the previous publication.

Brussels Office: EBC’s office has been restructured and four working stations as well as a meeting room are now available.

ES/JM/IR

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