The European Brain Council - EBC

A collaborative organisation covering all aspects of brain research and brain disorders in Europe

A Unique European Organisation
The European Brain Council (EBC) was officially founded on the 22nd March, 2002, in Brussels. It has a unique structure bringing together as it does, a host of European organisations with a specific interest in the brain. Members include pan-European bodies representing neurologists and psychiatrists, as well as patient federations in those respective fields, neurosurgeons, basic neuroscientists, and relevant areas of industry and commerce.

The Founding Members
The European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA) represents European-wide organisations for patients with neurological illnesses, such as the European Parkinson’s Disease Association, Alzheimer Europe, European Dystonia Federation etc. The Global Alliance for Mental Illness Advocacy Networks (GAMIAN-Europe) represents associations of psychiatric patients. The European Federation of Neurological Societies (EFNS) represents national societies of neurologists throughout Europe and the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP) is a European-wide organisation of psychiatrists and pharmacologists and other basic scientists with an interest in neuropsychopharmacology. The European Association of Neurosurgical Societies (EANS) is a federation of national societies of neurosurgeons. The EBC wants to have industry represented, but in most cases industry does not have a sub-division dealing with neuroscience organised at a European level. Until that happens, we accept individual companies to represent a whole branch of industry. The Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse (AOK), as the biggest German health insurance company - represented by the AOK Schleswig-Holstein - is a member but represents all of the insurance industry in Europe. Likewise, it is expected to have membership of the pharmaceutical industry and of the device industry.

Constitution
According to its constitution, the EBC has as voting members European-wide organisations with an interest in the brain, normally only one for each major field. Any organisation that supports the aims of the EBC can become associated member. These associated members have no voting rights but otherwise enjoy equal rights as full members. Finally, organisations or individuals that have contributed in an outstanding fashion to the aims of the EBC can become honorary members. The organisation is under incorporation in Belgium and its official location is Brussels, but its official business address and secretariat is at the EFNS Branch Office in Florence, Italy (*). The highest authority of the EBC is the annual general meeting, while the Board of Directors meet more often and day to day business is done by the President and other officers.

Aims of the EBC
The aims of the EBC are to promote brain research, the treatment and care of Europeans suffering from brain disorders, and to improve the life of those living with the consequences of a brain disorder. In pursuing these aims, the EBC will deal with issues that are spanning the interests of several of the membership organisations. Because of its huge network of expert scientists, expert doctors and expert patients as well as industry, the EBC is eminently suited to become a collaborating partner of the Commission of Research and the Commission of Health and Consumer Protection (SANCO) of the European Commission, as well as the WHO regional office for Europe. The EBC will serve as a vehicle for information and increased co-operation between the membership organisations. The EBC will also stimulate collaboration between all interested parties at a national level without interfering in the affairs of the national societies. Finally, the EBC wants to be a partner for European-wide foundations and businesses with an interest in brain research and the treatment of brain disorders.

Finances
Subscriptions paid by member organisations finance the basic running costs of the EBC. Additionally, representatives of many members give of their time and services on a voluntary basis which facilitates a
highly cost-effective operation. All projects undertaken by the EBC will have to be financed individually. This may be by way of unrestricted educational grants, governmental grants, donations and legacies.

**Mode of Operation**

The EBC will endeavour to involve all membership organisations in its projects, so far as is possible. Members of project groups may be appointed directly by the EBC leadership, but the EBC may also ask membership organisations to find and appoint suitable members of project groups. This way of working allows the EBC to find the best-suited experts throughout Europe be they doctors, basic scientists or expert patients.

**Work programme**

In 2003 the priority areas of work of the EBC will be:

- Strengthening of the already excellent collaboration with the EC and with Mr. Busquin’s cabinet in particular, in order to further develop the theme “brain disorders” as a research area within the 6th Framework Programme.
- Propose a separate programme on “brain research” within the forthcoming 7th Framework Programme. EBC will ask to be actively involved from the very beginning in the preparation of the working documents for the 7th Framework Programme.
- Gather and scientifically analyse data on the cost of brain disorders through the project “Cost of Disorders of the Brain in Europe”. This project will provide, for the first time, a single document containing the costs of brain disorders in Europe in real economic terms, Euros.
- Write a position paper “Hope through research for Europeans with a Brain Disease” describing the major brain disorders and the importance of the contribution of basic research to the improvement of the quality of life of those living with/affected by these conditions. This position paper will report exclusively on European examples of research.
- “European Brain Research” a major conference jointly organised with the EC – DG Research and the European Parliament.

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_European Brain Council_

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