

Questionnaire on common challenges and regional cooperation

SUMMARY

SBC – Serbian Brain Council

HSfN – Hellenic Society for Neuroscience

HBC – Hungarian Brain Council

CBC – Croatian Brain Council

ANA – Austrian Neuroscience Association

TNC – Turkish Neurological Society

1. What is in your view the rationale for launching or sustaining a NBC and/or national neuroscience society?

- to bring together basic neuroscientists with clinicians, patients, pharma industry and stakeholders, and to create a national network. (SBC, HSfN, HBC, CBC, ANA)
- to pursue activities in order to get better funding of basic and clinical neuroscience. (SBC, HBC)
- increase the knowledge within the general population on brain disorders and neuroscience achievements in this field (SBC, HSfN, HBC, TNS)
- NBC should liaise within its network to EBC – international dimension. (SBC, CBC, TNS)
- Better health care support for diagnosis and treatment of brain disorders (neurology, psychiatry, neurosurgery etc) (HBC)
- NBC may be beneficial in showing patients, their associated support organizations, and the public, the progress being made in dealing with their diseases. (ANA)

2. What were in your view the most significant challenges that your NBC/neuroscience society has faced during the last 5 years? And to what extent has your NBC/neuroscience society been able to overcome them?

Challenges:

- insufficient funding (SBC, HSfN, TNS)
- better and more transparent relations with the stakeholders in ministries. (SBC)
- Brain drain (SBC, HSfN)
- Recruitment and mobilization of membership. (SBC)
- The crucial challenge is the state of health and care for patients. (SBC)
- Patient societies (eg. for psychiatric diseases) are rather small (SBC)
- Defragmentation and decentralization of societies linked to brain (CBC)
- Multi-disciplinary conflicts about certain brain related disorders (TNS)
- Competitiveness in research (ANA)
- Members expect from their society some immediate personal reward (ANA)

Mitigation measures:



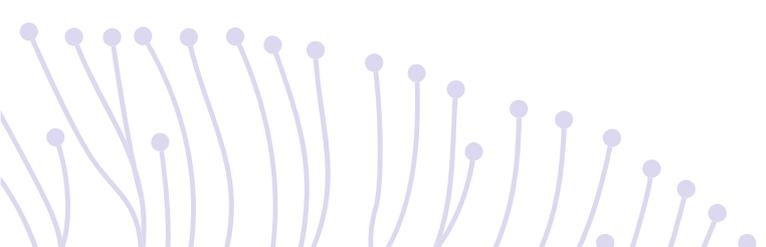
- FENS, IBRO and other international societies support (SBC, HSfN)
- Private funding (HSfN)
- Devoted personal work by active members (HSfN)
- The sustained activity of the SBC Board and EBC support however keeps yearly plans floating. (SBC)
- NBC should support the societal value and visibility of patient societies. (SBC)
- Gained small but still independent funding in order to succeed as a unifying party. (CBC)
- Close relationships with health ministry and health sector agencies (TNS)
- Specific scientific working groups for each neurological disease group (TNS)
- Pledge to the government to furnish national research agency with a reasonable budget (ANA)

3. What would you consider to be the most significant achievement of your NBC/neuroscience society?

- The initiative to host the first Regional NBC meeting. (SBC)
- Successful and awarded BAW (HSfN)
- National Brain Research Program (HBC)
- Bringing the European strategy as a unifying platform (CBC)
- World Brain Year in 2014. Networking symposium to increase awareness for the need of research and to establish new collaborations, to support young researchers. (TNS)
- NBC should produce results (for patients, research, and the public at large) and will not, and cannot be, another self-sufficient association (ANA)

4. Could regional cooperation between NBCs-/neuroscience societies benefit the work of your organization? And if yes, could you shortly elaborate on how this could be beneficial?

- Internationalisation of NBC activities may strengthen its national influence. (SBC)
- Greater exposure to funding opportunities and joint organization of meetings (HSfN)
- Stronger collaboration of regional NBCs and the Danube Neurology Symposium (HBC)
- Share our experience and help each other to solve local problems (CBC)
- Session at Annual National Congress which is called "In the region" (TNS)
- To learn from other NBC where they succeeded or failed. (ANA)



5. How should the European Brain Council (EBC) support NBCs/neuroscience societies and collaborate with them?

- By offering the toolbox for advocacy and outreach. (SBC, HBC)
- Serving as an umbrella organization for the internationalisation of NBC efforts. (SBC)
- Activate EBC ambassadors that are dormant. (SBC)
- Providing access to mutual funding opportunities (SBC, HSfN, HBC, CBC)
- Help in organizing networking meetings with stakeholders in different countries, as well as to provide travel and participation awards - webex or other web-based connections for students (SBC, HSfN, HBC, CBC)
- Financial and other support for the launching of new NBC (HSfN, ANA)
- Better health care support for diagnosis and treatment of brain disorders (HBC)
- Day of EBC within each country (EBC provides a renown speaker) (CBC)
- EBC participation to the national congress (TNS)
- EBC announcements are very important and informative (TNS)

6. Additional remarks

The NBC may need some money if it wants to do some statistics, polls, secretarial support, website, public relations and alike. To get such money (primarily) from industrial partners may obviously be a delicate issue. Societies engaged in basic research (as ANA) will only be able to provide a very moderate contribution. We may be able to get some from public sources (Ministry, City administration and alike), but only as long as we operate in (and not against) their interest. We do plan to invite public agencies to become ABC members.

