



European Brain Council Latvian meeting report

Riga, 9th December 2011, 13.00 – 16.00

The meeting was attended by the following representatives:

Associated Professor **Igors Aksiks**, neurosurgeon, Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine University of Latvia

Professor **Vija Zaiga Kluša**, neuroscientist/neuropharmacologist, Head of the Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Latvia

Professor **Andrejs Millers**, neurologist, Head of the Department of Neurology, Riga Stradins University

Professor **Ruta Muceniece**, neuroscientist, Head of the Division of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Latvia

Professor **Elmārs Rancāns**, psychiatrist, Head of the Department of Psychiatry, Riga Stradins University

Pharmaceutical industry: Dr. biol. **Ilga Misāne**, neuropharmacologist, Research Project Manager, JSC GRINDEX

Dr. **Alastair Benbow**, EBC Executive Director

Tadeusz Hawrot, EBC Project Manager

The agenda was as follows:

13.00 - Participants introduction

13.20 - European Brain Council: Background and aims; National Action Groups and National Brain Councils

14.00 - Situation of brain research and those affected by brain diseases in Latvia - open discussion

16.00 - Conclusions and way forward

Alastair Benbow opened the meeting, thanked Vija Kluša for the work put in making the meeting possible and encouraged all the participants to introduce themselves.

The presentation about the EBC, its projects and goals followed, with a particular attention given to a project to make 2014 the European Year of the Brain.

Afterwards, the concept of National Brain Councils and National ACTION Groups was explained.

Subsequently the following presentations were made:



Vija Kluša - neuroscience research in Latvia

Andrejs Millers - situation of neurology in Latvia

Elmārs Rancāns - situation of psychiatry in Latvia

Igors Aksiks - situation of neurosurgery in Latvia

Ilga Misāne - situation of industry in Latvia on the example of Grinded - the biggest pharmaceutical company in Baltic States.

During the general discussion that followed, participants agreed that brain is not given enough priority. Heart diseases are a main priority in Latvia in the health area.

As a result, there is very little public funding for brain available in Latvia.

Despite the fact that Latvia (and the two other Baltic States) has many recognized specialists, there is not enough presence of Latvia in EU funded projects conducted by international consortia.

There was a consensus among the participants that at this stage it is better to start with a Latvian Action Group for Brain that could in time become a brain council.

Participants would like to see a continuous cooperation with EBC and receiving further input from EBC, especially in the early stages of existence of Latvian Action Group.

Among the different projects the action group could get involved in European Year of the Brain as well as in talking to Latvian government to prioritize brain during Latvian Presidency in the Council in 2015.

Creation of the Latvian Action Group can also create a good opportunity to send a short note about it to Latvian Commissioner, Members of the European Parliament as well as Latvian media.

The next meeting will be planned and coordination will be done by Vija Kluša. More people will be invited including representatives of patient organizations.