

Future activities in ESCIF

Some of the following activities and projects are those already planned and set in motion by the Executive; others involve collaboration with other members of the SCI community. Further proposals for projects will be discussed at the Congress in the session “Future activities”.

Please remember that the Executive is always pleased to hear of new initiatives from member organisations, particularly if these could benefit from a collaborative effort with other member organisations. Any ideas and proposals should be sent to president@escif.org.

Successful (re)integration of people with SCI

As mentioned in the President’s Report, this project began in the autumn with a weekend seminar in Nottwil. The preliminary reports from the working groups will be presented during the ESCIF Congress 2015.

The next meeting of the working groups is planned for September 2015 and the final reports will be prepared in advance of next year’s Congress. The issues considered by the project will form the basis for the theme of the ESCIF Congress 2016.

We thank Coloplast for their continued support of this project.

ESCIF Congress and Assembly of Delegates 2016

Next year’s ESCIF Congress and Assembly of Delegates will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 11 to 13 May 2016. The venue is Hotel KOLPING WIEN - ZENTRAL <http://www.kolping-wien-zentral.at>. We are very grateful to Hannes Wiesinger and the board of our member organisation Verband der Querschnittgelähmten Österreichs (Spinal Cord Injury Federation of Austria) for offering to host the Congress for a second time!

We look forward to celebrating ESCIF’s 10th Anniversary in the wonderful city of Vienna!

ESCIF strategy group

As was mentioned at the last Congress, the ESCIF Executive has discussed the idea of forming a strategy group. We are very keen to go ahead with this idea.

Our plan is to invite representatives from some of our member organisations (e.g. from countries that are not currently represented in the Executive) to join the Executive for a weekend of brainstorming and discussion. The aim of the meeting will be to evaluate the progress and results of the Federation since its foundation in 2006 to the present; to draw up plans and goals for the medium term i.e. the next 3 – 5 years; to devise a longer-term strategy – where should ESCIF be in 10 years’ time?

The plan is **not** to establish a “standing committee” – but an ad hoc group of around 10 people (including the Executive) who are willing to share their ideas in order to further the Federation. We already have some ideas for possible candidates – but we would appreciate suggestions and nominations from our member organisations.

Further projects ...

In addition to the activities described above, the Executive still intends to move forward with a couple of projects proposed earlier.

Growing your organisation

A project designed to help national organisations to develop their organisations, activities and lobbying potential. The project is based on three specific initiatives.

- As we know that many of our present members (and prospective members) are currently suffering from cutbacks in their traditional funding, the first focus will be on fundraising. The idea is to create a tool-box of ideas and activities that can be used to identify and contact alternative sources of funding. While we fully recognise that there may be cultural differences between European countries with respect to voluntary/humanitarian/charity organisations and how they can/should be funded, we believe that an exchange of ideas will be extremely valuable.
- We plan to establish a “partner programme” in which ESCIF member organisations agree to act as a mentor for small or newly-established SCI consumer organisations (particularly organisations that are not yet members of ESCIF). Many ESCIF member organisations are/have been involved in such “partnerships” before – we would like to take these efforts “one step further” by making it possible for smaller SCI organisations to learn from and participate actively in ESCIF.
- All our member organisations, at some time or another, are involved in lobbying the government of their countries and the relevant decision-making authorities (health, social services etc). The final focus of this “umbrella project” will look at how to strengthen these efforts – using the experience of ESCIF members as a starting point.

Unfortunately, a sponsor for the first stage of the project has recently withdrawn. Negotiations are now underway to find alternative funding.

Ageing well with SCI

This project is an offshoot of last year’s Congress in the Netherlands. A discussion on the final day of the meeting concluded with the idea of a longer term project based on the theme of how people with SCI can live a longer and a more healthy life.

A draft proposal for the project was drawn up by members of the board of DON (including Jos Dekkers and Frans Penninx) and by Daniel Burden from SIA in the UK and the proposal was then discussed in the ESCIF Executive.

The Executive believes that the project is of great relevance and potential benefit to people living with SCI – especially as people now live longer following injury and many newly-injured are older at the onset of SCI – and we would, therefore, urge our member organisations to take an active part in the project.

A detailed project proposal will be sent to delegates and member organisations before the Congress and will be uploaded on the ESCIF website.

An idea ...

In response to the fact that some of our member organisations, or other organisations who would like to join the Federation, may be prevented from attending the Congress due to financial problems, the Executive has discussed the following idea:

- To set up a small number of "ESCIF Congress grants" that will cover congress registration costs and a fixed amount towards travelling expenses for one participant (plus assistant where required).

Obviously, there is some further work to be done on bringing this idea to fruition, especially as it may involve some legal or statutory implications, but we have envisaged the following "conditions":

- The grants may be applied for by existing ESCIF member organisations who have run into severe financial difficulties, or by organisations who are interested in joining ESCIF but lack the necessary funding
- The grants will only be open to participants who have the support of their national organisation
- The grants will be "one-off" or will be limited time-wise so that organisations will not be able to apply for grants for several years in a row
- The applications will be evaluated and grants offered by the members of ESCIF Executive or by a review team appointed by the Executive.

Jane Horsewell, ESCIF President, Copenhagen April 2015