

President's Report 2016 – 2017

This report covers the period from the last ESCIF Congress and Assembly of Delegates – May 2016 to the present – and outlines what has been done and achieved since the last meeting of ESCIF delegates.

Note from the President

Although this document is entitled "President's Report" it would be more accurate to call it "Vice President's Report" or "Report from the Executive"! 2016 was a very difficult year for ESCIF. My long illness and frequent hospitalisations put a great burden on the other members of the Executive – particularly on Gunilla who deputised for me. I would like to thank them all for their efforts.

ESCIF Congress 2016 in Vienna, Austria



Thanks to our host, Verband der Querschnittgelähmten Österreichs – VQÖ, the ESCIF Congress was a success.

The theme of the congress was *Successful integration after SCI* and was based on the Successful Integration Project run by ESCIF. The project was finalised at the beginning of 2016 and during the Congress, all the

working groups reported their final findings of their focus area.

In addition, the organisers had invited a number of outside speakers, all experts in their fields, who spoke about the different focus areas of the Successful Integration Project. The general introductory lecture was given by Dr. Erwin Buchinger, Ombudsman, Ministry of Social Affairs on the topic of social inclusion and social integration. Dr. Erwin Buchinger was, in fact, the first person to sign The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

ESCIF Executive meetings

The Executive has held two meetings "in person" in the course of the year: the first in Lobbach in the middle of October 2016 (in connection with the meeting of the Strategy group), the second in Ljubljana in February 2017 (together with a meeting with the organisers of the present Congress). As usual, a meeting has also been held in the days running up to the present Congress.

In addition, the Executive has held a number of telephone meetings throughout the year and is in regular contact via email.

Preparation for the ESCIF Congress 2017

Our current hosts, Zveza Paraplegikov Slovenije, met with the ESCIF Executive in Vienna during the Congress last year and later on in Ljubljana in February this year to discuss the programme and practicalities of this year's Congress. ESCIF is very grateful to the Slovenian organisation for arranging the Congress.

ESCIF Congress grants

The idea of the ESCIF Congress grants has been launched this year. The grants will cover congress registration costs and a fixed amount towards travelling expenses for one participant (plus assistant where required). Members were informed of the possibility to apply for a grant for this year's Congress, however, no member organisation took the opportunity.

Communication with members: ESCIF website, Facebook and newsletter

Once again this year we have tried to post regular updates on the ESCIF website but we still lack input from member organisations. The Executive would like to encourage all member organisations to use the website to announce and report on events and initiatives in their country, to find collaborators for projects and activities, and to post updates on ongoing projects. Please send your information to secretary@escif.org or to president@escif.org.

During the year, we decided to make the Newsletter more mobile- and user-friendly. The layout and the way it is distributed has been modernised. If you haven't registered yet for the new newsletter please contact 2ndexecutive@escif.org or sign up on the ESCIF webpage. Again we would be very pleased to receive input from ESCIF members and other "colleagues". If you would like an item to be included in the newsletter, please send it to secretary@escif.org or to president@escif.org.

We have also increased the updates on the ESCIF Facebook page. If you haven't liked us on FB yet, don't forget to do so!

ESCIF at ISCoS 2016 in Vienna



ESCIF was, as usual, very visible at the ISCoS scientific meeting in Vienna, Austria. ESCIF had, once again, been asked to plan the consumer workshop for the ISCoS meeting.

ESCIF's president, Jane Horsewell, had arranged the workshop together with an international working group. We had chosen to call our session "a narrative" to underline that we wouldn't cover all issues involved in the comprehensive management of SCI and, therefore, would not be

presenting a chronological account of all stages in the “career” of a newly injured SCI person. Nor was it a regular workshop in the sense that we intended to cover a specific topic in detail but rather different issues where consumer advocacy organisations have played an important role in pushing the agenda forward. The session was chaired by Gunilla Åhrén, the Vice-President of ESCIF, since Jane Horsewell, the President of ESCIF, was unfortunately unable to attend the ISCoS scientific meeting.

We had invited some active (and vocal) SCI consumers, who are all involved in some form of consumer advocacy, to share their experience and ideas with us. Lucy Robinson, a peer support coordinator at Stoke Mandeville in the UK, Erika Nilsson, a project coordinator at Spinalis in Sweden, Kim Anderson-Erisman, an Associate Professor University of Miami in the US, Tara Jeji, Program Director at the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation in Canada and Gunilla Åhrén, who is employed by Personskadeforbundet RTP in Sweden.

ESCIF also took part in one of the poster sessions with a poster from the Successful Integration Project. Here we presented the final results from the five working groups.

There are many posters displayed at the ISCoS meeting and we were pleased that so many people showed an interest in discussing our findings with us.

ESCIF Strategy group



ESCIF was founded more than 10 years ago now. The Executive considered this an appropriate time to evaluate what has been done and, more importantly, what needs to be done in the future. we decided to invite some ESCIF members to a

“Strategy meeting”.

In October the Strategy group held a meeting at the Manfred Sauer Foundation in Lobbach to set the trajectories of the federation. The group consisted of the Executive board members and the following 'guests': Daniel Joggi, Chairman of the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation, Urs Styger – the Secretary of ESCIF, Frans Penninx board member of DON in the Netherlands and Fiona Bolger – CEO of Spinal Injuries Ireland. Rebecca Harvey led the Strategy group through its discussions as she has over 10 years of experience in evaluating organizations and NGOs across many fields of activity.

It was a fruitful meeting and we would like to thank all the participants and especially Manfred Sauer who hosted the Strategy group meeting.

Fundraising and sponsorship

None of ESCIF’s activities – past or planned – would be possible without the financial and/or practical support of our sponsors. You can read about our regular sponsors under Special Thanks on the ESCIF website.