

April 2010

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



European Epilepsy Day

Dear IBE members and supporters

Background

I am delighted to report that one of the more important decisions taken at the recent meeting of the IBE and ILAE Executive Committees was to move forward with the creation of a European Epilepsy Day.

This follows from background research undertaken by the Political Action Group of EUCARE, including a survey of IBE and ILAE member associations in Europe to gauge interest in such an initiative. The results of the survey showed that both IBE and ILAE associations were very enthusiastic about the plan and were also in favour of holding the event in February each year.

Given the magnitude of the planned European Epilepsy Day and the impact it could achieve, the Political Action Group approached the IBE European Regional Committee which has since indicated its agreement and enthusiasm in being involved. The ILAE Commission on European Affairs has also been invited to take part in the event. This will not be a fundraising event, since several IBE and ILAE members already use annual or biennial national events as a means of generating funding (as well as awareness) for their associations.

Launching European Epilepsy Day

European Epilepsy Day will be launched on 14th February 2011 (the Feast Day of St Valentine, who is reputed to have had epilepsy) and the Political Action Group, in liaison with the IBE and ILAE European structures, will develop a launch activity with the potential to generate a good level of response from both Members of the European Parliament and journalists.

The aim of European Epilepsy Day will be to promote epilepsy awareness at regional level through educational and promotional activities.

Over the coming months EUCARE, together with the IBE Regional Committee and the International League Against Epilepsy, will be setting plans in place for next year's launch. As details are confirmed we will be able to provide you with more information on how the

day will be celebrated and how our members in Europe can become involved in the event.

Planned objective

The European Epilepsy Day is an important development and will serve to send out the right signals to the European Union, where more and more emphasis is being placed on the need for medical and lay associations to work together on initiatives requesting the support of the European Parliament.

European Epilepsy Day will add to the other regional epilepsy days already organised by IBE members and regional committees. For several years the IBE Latin American Regional Committee has celebrated an annual Latin American Epilepsy Day on the 9th September, while an epilepsy day introduced in China, after discussion with IBE, is supported by several other members in the Asian region. In time it is planned to have annual epilepsy days in each of IBE's seven regions.

International Epilepsy Day

Such events would respond to the often voiced request of IBE members that an International Epilepsy Day be created. Although such a day has been discussed by the IBE and ILAE Executive Committees, further consideration was postponed until the WHO would provide its support.

The support of the World Health Organisation is seen as vital for the International Epilepsy Day and the success of the European Epilepsy Day and other regional epilepsy days may be crucial in achieving this.

All the best,

Mike

Mike Glynn
President