**ESBRA History**

At the time of the foundation of ISBRA (1980) it appeared desirable to build up an European alcohol research society representing a counterpart to the two regional societies already existing (RSA, the American Research Society on Alcoholism, and JMSAS, the Japanese Medical Society of Alcohol Studies). Such a society could strengthen alcohol research inside Europe as well as cooperation between European scientists involved in alcohol research. The steering committee for its foundation was set up on the initiative of J.P. von WARTBURG, at that time President of ISBRA, during the 1982 ISBRA congress held in Munich, Germany. Roger NORDMANN was asked to chair this committee aimed to establish tentative by-laws. These by-laws were approved by the European colleagues during the 1986 ISBRA Congress held in Helsinki, Finland. The name chosen for the new-born society (European Society for Biomedical Research on Alcoholism) and its by-laws were deposited by its Secretary, Philippe DE WITTE, and registered in Brussels, Belgium, by the Belgian Ministry of Justice as a scientific non profit-making association on March 12, 1987. Following the by-laws, the Society is managed by a Board of Directors elected by the membership for a 4 years term from a list of candidates which takes into account an even geographical distribution. The members of the Board are unpaid.

The most important scientific activity is represented by the biennial ESBRA Congress organized during each uneven year. After the first Congress held in Paris in 1987 with the cooperation of the French Ministry of Health, the following Congresses took place in Belgium, Norway, Italy, Germany (Stuttgart), Sweden, Spain, France, Czech Republic, U.K., Germany (Berlin), Finland and Austria. The next (14th.) Congress will take place in Warsaw (Poland) on September 8-11, 2013. From the first to the last congress, there has been a gradual increase in the number of participants, particularly younger colleagues, as well as a significant increase in the proportion of participants involved in clinical research compared to those devoted to preclinical research. To facilitate the participation of European scientists of pre-doctoral status wishing to present a communication at an ESBRA Congress, grants have been awarded through a selection procedure established by an ESBRA Nominations Committee. ESBRA is very grateful to the generous sponsoring of these awards by various pharmaceutical companies.

Furthermore an award of 25.000 euros donated by Mr. Manfred Lautenschläger from Heidelberg, Germany, is granted since 2007 during each ESBRA Congress to a well-established alcohol researcher who has contributed strongly to the understanding of alcohol-related and alcohol-associated diseases or the development of treatment strategies in alcohol-associated diseases. As stated by the present ESBRA President, Helmut K. SEITZ, who was successful in getting the necessary support from Mr. Lautenschläger, this scientific award is the highest endowed price in Alcohol Research worldwide.

During even years ESBRA organizes a biennial Award meeting on a specialized subject selected by the host. In order to recognize a significant contribution to biomedical research on alcoholism by an European scientist under 35 years of age an award is attributed to the winner of the selection of candidates made by the ESBRA Nominations Committee. Like the ESBRA Congresses, these award meetings (known from 1997 as the ESBRA-NORDMANN Award by an ESBRA decision in favour of its Founder-President) took place in various European locations (Valencia, Warsaw, Cardiff, Vienna, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Oliena, Göteborg, Lisbon, Paris, Cagliari, Heidelberg). The topics of these award meetings covered a large variety of fundamental and clinical research areas, a fact that accords with the wishes expressed since the foundation of the Society. The next award meeting will take place on June 8-9, 2012, in Basel (Switzerland).
The conference program includes a Young Investigator Symposium, comprising four presentations delivered by young European speakers (chosen by a Selection Committee) who will receive a contribution to travel/living expenses related to the meeting.

Besides congresses and award meetings, various symposia have been organized under the auspices of ESBRA or jointly with other societies, such as ISBRA or SFA (the French Society on Alcoholology).

The first ESBRA Congress held in Paris in 1987 having been devoted to a special topic, its proceedings were published as a book entitled « Alcohol Toxicity and Free Radical Mechanisms » edited by R. NORDMANN, C.RIBIERE and H.ROUACH (371 pp., Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1988). The abstracts of all subsequent ESBRA Congresses as well as ESBRA News have been and continue to be published in « Alcohol and Alcoholism » which is the official journal of ESBRA jointly with MCA (the British Medical Council on Alcoholism). The information concerning ESBRA is also available on its site (www.esbra.com). Participation to ESBRA is not restricted to European researchers, the Society being glad to include many members from USA and other non-European countries.

Current ESBRA Officers and Board of Directors:
President: Helmut SEITZ, Germany
Vice President: Giancarlo COLOMBO, Italy
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