



**IAPB COUNCIL OF MEMBERS MEETING**  
**17 SEPTEMBER, 2013**

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**AGENDA ITEM 1.2B: EUROPE REGIONAL REPORT**

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## EUROPE REGIONAL REPORT

### Significant achievements

1. The IAPB Europe Action Plan for 2013-2017 was finalized and approved by the co-chairs on a regional meeting held in June 2013 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The representatives of some Eastern-European countries were also invited to the meeting for an informal discussion in order to identify the key issues in this region. ROP and diabetic retinopathy are quite frequent in this part of Europe; however, the early diagnosis and treatment is sometimes difficult due to financial problems or due to the poor accessibility of eye care services. Furthermore, there are no existing blindness prevention programs aiming to reduce the incidence of these diseases and there are practically no national eye health plans at all in these countries. Taking the above into consideration, we agreed that we have to encourage the key opinion leaders (leaders of the national ophthalmological societies) of the Eastern-European countries to contact the ministry of health in order to develop a national V2020 program. In the future, we also plan to organize workshops helping also advocacy in this region.
2. The European Coalition for Eye Health was established last year with the participation of IAPB Europe to raise the profile of vision and eye health and preventing visual impairment in Europe. The real work is just going to begin, the priorities for the next 12 months will be determined and activity plans will be developed at the end of September in a meeting in Brussels. On the following day, on the occasion of World Sight Day 2013, the European Forum Against Blindness (EFAB) organizes an information stand in the European Parliament.
3. One Vision 2020 Symposium on diabetic retinopathy and two well-attended workshops on ROP were held in May and June on international East-European Congresses: Black Sea Ophthalmic Society (BSOS) and ESCRS, Tbilisi Georgia and South-East European Ophthalmological Society (SEEOS), Ohrid, Macedonia. The ROP specialists from this region shared their experiences in the

treatment of the disease and in organizing ROP screenings on a national level and a regional data collection was initiated.

### **Key ongoing issues**

1. As it was mentioned above, ROP is still a major cause of blindness in Europe, especially in the Eastern and Southern part. In many countries, with the development of prenatal care, the chance of premature infants to survive has improved and as a result, the number of children with ROP has increased. Shreveport Sees Russia has provided IAPB with funds for ROP activities over the last three years and an increased amount of funding is expected for the following years. Accordingly, we plan to increase the activities we support, mainly national or regional ROP workshops and training programs. Unfortunately, local NGO activity is still very low in our continent but we will try to make new contacts and ask for some financial support for our work.
2. We believe that it is very important to share useful documents (i.e. the WHO Global Action plan for 2014-2019) and other sources of information with the ophthalmologists who are interested in advocacy or blindness prevention. We plan to do this through improving the Europe region subpage of the IAPB website. At the renewed webpage one will be able to get more information about the work of IAPB Europe, about the staff, he can see the upcoming events in Europe in connection with eye health care or blindness prevention.

Budapest, 31 August, 2013

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