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The Roles of National Representatives for ECCO

Background

From the inception of ECCO in 2001 there have been National Representatives from each member country. When ECCO evolved from a federation of country members to individual membership in 2008, the position of the two National Representatives from each of 35 member countries continued, to become members of ECCO's Council of National Representatives.

ECCO's mission is to improve the care for patients with IBD across Europe. The vigour of ECCO comes from its ethos of providing opportunity for new and young people. National Representatives are a key component of ECCO's interaction with its members and their societies in different countries to help ECCO achieve its goal of improving care – through education of advanced trainees, dissemination of practice guidelines through workshops, facilitating research through Grants and Fellowships and interacting with national patient-based organisations.

With roles come responsibilities. A survey of the 60 National Representatives (NRs) after the 2012 ECCO Congress in Barcelona, enabled the specific roles, expectations and responsibilities to be defined. These are detailed here.

Roles

1. To elect the President- Elect, Treasurer, Secretary and the Internal Auditors of ECCO in the General Assembly.
2. To promote individual membership and the profile of ECCO in their country.
3. To involve local partners (corporate, national authorities, national patient organisations).
4. To support ECCO in promoting the ECCO Congress in your country.
5. To promote opportunities in ECCO to IBD specialists and trainees.



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Responsibilities

1. To select two top trainees from their country to attend the IBD Intensive Advanced Course.
2. To attend the annual General Assembly and the Council of National Representatives Meeting, which takes place every other year.
3. To inform the ECCO Office of the election of a new NR in their country and send details to the ECCO Office:

Country Members are required to define the process of selecting their National Representatives and period of tenure. (Statutes 2018, point 4.4.2.4.)

It is recommended that NRs who have already been in post for >6 years stand down and are encouraged to pursue other roles within or on behalf of ECCO.

4. To inform the ECCO Office of the process by which top trainees are selected to represent their country by attendance at the IBD Intensive Advanced Course.

Expectations

1. To be themselves a member of ECCO in good standing (in other words, paid up!).
2. At the ECCO Congress, NRs should not attend any meeting or symposium that conflicts with General Assembly Meeting on the Thursday evening.
3. If an NR does not recommend trainees for the IBD Intensive Advanced Course or is unable to attend two out of three meetings of the Council of National Representatives Meeting, then that country's members will be informed, so that they have the opportunity to consider whether the NR is too busy to fulfil the role in their interests.
4. Supporting ECCO and the Congress may be achieved by providing dates of national meetings to ECCO (to receive promotional material on ECCO to be distributed), placing a banner or link to the programme on their national society website, or mailings to the local database.
5. Promoting opportunities to trainees includes ECCO Fellowships, Grants and Travel Awards, abstract and JCC submission, promotion of committee membership and guideline participation, most easily achieved through a Trainees' section of the national Gastroenterology society or email to the local database of members for dissemination to trainees.
6. To encourage applications for travel awards from Central and Eastern Europe; three out of five travel awards will be offered to specific countries through National Representatives in May each year. If the offer is not accepted by August, then that award will be open to other applications. Every country can and is encouraged to apply for one of the two open travel awards.



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Opportunities during and after a term as National Representative

1. Host an ECCO Workshop in your country, best aligned to a National Gastroenterology meeting (note the criteria on <http://www.ecco-ibd.eu> and contact the EduCom Chair).
2. Write a profile of IBD in your country for ECCO News (contact the ECCO Office and/or Secretary).
3. Propose a young trainee for a Travel Award (note the criteria on <http://www.ecco-ibd.eu> and contact the SciCom Chair).
4. Create a Country Profile Poster to be displayed at the ECCO Congress (a good task for a trainee).
5. Suggest names of academic clinicians and scientists from their country for abstract review (annually, by September, to congress management, ecco-congress@ecco-ibd.eu), in addition to being nominated to score abstracts.
6. Be 'the face of ECCO' at the ECCO Booth during the coffee breaks at the congress (contact congress management, ecco-congress@ecco-ibd.eu).
7. Co-chair poster rounds at the Congress (to opt out, please let congress management know: ecco-congress@ecco-ibd.eu).
8. Stand as a committee member for ECCO after a term as National Rep (find out about the role from the chair of the appropriate committee and apply when openly advertised).

Actions

1. NRs should start the selection process for trainees to attend the IBD Intensive Advanced Course and inform the ECCO Office (ecco@ecco-ibd.eu) of the process.
2. Expect to be contacted by the ECCO Office and Secretary (ecco@ecco-ibd.eu) about writing a profile of your country for ECCO News.
3. Identify a suitable person to create a Country Profile Poster about IBD care in your country for the ECCO Congress (portrait-style dimensions as for all posters at the Congress: A0 – vertical posters).
4. Participate in the online voting rounds of ECCO Guidelines upon the respective invitation email (which will be sent separately for each project).

Conclusion

Representing your country as a National Representative is a privilege and brings recognition but was never intended to be an endorsement by ECCO of a person's standing as an IBD specialist in their country. For this reason, there has to be a fixed term of office and change. The roles are here defined, as well as the expectations of ECCO with regard to responsibilities. The position carries power within ECCO, the opportunity of promoting their young members (through selection for the IBD Intensive Advanced Course), their country (through ECCO News and profiles) and a responsibility of representing their country to ECCO and ECCO to their country.