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ECCO Office

Ungargasse 6/13
1030 Vienna, Austria

Tel. +43-(0)1-710 22 42
Fax +43-(0)1-710 22 42-001
E-Mail ecco@ecco-ibd.eu
Url www.ecco-ibd.eu

SWIFT GIBAAWXXXX
IBAN AT5720111 28748039100

ATU 63674955
Austrian Register of Associations
N° 468755685

The Roles of National Representatives for ECCO

Vienna, March 19, 2015

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 33 member countries continued, to become members of ECCO's Strategic Council, which advises the Governing Body.

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 62 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 and Secretary 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

Responsibilities

1. To select two top trainees from their country to attend the Advanced Course
2. To attend the Strategic Council meeting and General Assembly
3. To inform the ECCO Office of the process by which NRs are selected in their country and send details of newly elected NRs to the ECCO Office
4. To inform the ECCO Office of the process by which top trainees are selected to represent their country by attendance at the Advanced Course



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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 the Strategic Council or General Assembly meetings on the Thursday evening
3. If an NR does not recommend trainees for the Advanced Course, or is unable to attend two out of three meetings of the Strategic Council, 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 September, 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.

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 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 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)



9. Represent ECCO on a UEG committee (find out about the potential roles through the ECCO Office. Names of departing NRs will be considered by ECCO GB who make the recommendation, but the choice will depend on how much the NR contributed to ECCO)

Actions (as of May 31, 2012)

1. The term of office for a National Representative shall be 3 years
2. The process for selecting NRs will be the choice of that country, commonly being one NR as an *ex-officio* position as Chair of the IBD society or section and the other elected by ECCO Members of that country. The ECCO Office must be informed of the procedure for electing the country's two NRs and this will be placed on the ECCO Members' website
3. An NR can be re-elected once, but this should be the exception rather than the expectation
4. NRs who have already been in post for >6 years will be expected to stand down and are encouraged to pursue other roles within or on behalf of ECCO
5. NRs should start the selection process for trainees to attend the Advanced Course and inform the ECCO Office (p.judkins@ecco-ibd.eu) of the process
6. Expect to be contacted by the ECCO Office and Secretary (ecco@ecco-ibd.eu) about writing a profile of your country for ECCO News
7. 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)

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 (electing the next President and Treasurer), the opportunity of promoting their young members (through selection for the Advanced Course), their country (through ECCO News and profiles) and a responsibility of representing their country to ECCO and ECCO to their country.

Dr. Séverine Vermeire
ECCO President
on behalf of the ECCO Governing Board

March 19, 2015

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