



EU-EYE is a European Alliance for Vision Research and Ophthalmology, which comprises 8 membering European organisations. Together these organisations represent over 15,000 medical doctors specialised in the treatment and research of eye diseases.

EU-EYE lobbies at European level to raise political and societal awareness of the importance of basic and clinical research in the field of vision care and science. EU-EYE is focused on raising the profile of vision research and ophthalmology to ensure that EU policymakers see this area as a priority for research funding.

### EU-EYE Members

- European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons **ESCRS**
- European Society of Retina Specialists **EURETINA**
- European Glaucoma Society **EGS**
- European Association for Vision and Eye Research **EVER**
- European Eye Bank Association **EEBA**
- European Society of Cornea and Ocular Surface Disease Specialists **EuCornea**
- European Association for the Study of Diabetes/Ophthalmology Section **EASDec**
- European Vision Institute **EVI**

### EU-EYE Board

Einar Stefánsson	<b>President</b> / EURETINA Representative
Carlo Traverso	<b>Vice-President</b> / EGS Representative
Jesper Hjortdal	<b>Secretary</b> / EEBA Representative
Paul Rosen	<b>Treasurer</b> / ESCRS Representative
Tunde Peto	<b>Board Member</b> / EASDec Representative
Leopold Schmetterer	<b>Board Member</b> / EVER Representative
Ulf Stenevi	<b>Board Member</b> / EuCornea Representative

### EU-EYE Objectives

Vision impairment leads to dramatic loss in quality of life. Increased research into eye diseases has the potential to improve the quality of life of millions of people and decrease inequalities in access to treatment, with significant benefits for public health as a whole.

EU-EYE calls on the EU institutions to make eye research a priority under existing and future research programmes in order to address the heavy and increasing burden of eye diseases and vision impairment on European societies.

This lobbying process includes:

- Increasing and sustaining political awareness at EU Level of ophthalmology and vision science.
- Increasing funding for vision research.
- Establishing EU-EYE as go-to partner for policy makers and relevant stakeholders.
- Ensuring representation of ophthalmology in the decision making process and influencing long-term priorities (post Horizon 2020)

## EU-EYE Activities to Date

### 2015:

- After a tender process EU-EYE appointed Burson-Marsteller as an external advisor to its affairs. **Burson-Marsteller** is a global communications company with a team in Brussels who specialise in lobbying on legislative dossiers, mobilising political support and advocacy on disease-related policy
- EU-EYE appointed Agenda Communications to organise the activities of EU-EYE including the management of its website **www.eueye.org**
- Logo, website and position papers were established and lobbying strategy for 2015/2016 devised
- Organised launch events for EU-EYE at ESCRS, EURETINA and EVER Congresses
- Nine face to face meetings between EU-EYE Board members and Stakeholders (Commissioners and MEPs) on the importance of research funding for ophthalmology, including:
  - Anika Nowak (Cabinet of Commissioner Andriukaitis, responsible for healthcare systems and research, science and innovation), Brussels
  - Ruxandra Draghia Akli (Director within Health Directorate at DG Research and Innovation; now Deputy Director General), Brussels
  - Ian Banks (EFAB), Brussels – Regarding possible coalition activities
  - Remy Petitot (Assistant to MEP Françoise Grossetete, European People's Party), Brussels
  - Zoltan Massay-Kosube and Sascha Marschang (EPHA), Brussels
  - Michael Huebel (DG Santé), Luxembourg
  - Arthur Carvalho and Federico Paoli (DG Santé), Brussels
  - Alise Askinezere (Head of Office to MEP Catherine Stihler), Brussels
  - Soledad Cabezon Ruiz (MEP), Brussels
- With the guidance of Burson-Marsteller:
  - Mapped stakeholders to identify possible partners for EU-EYE already active in Brussels
  - Identified European Commissioners and members of European Parliament (MEPs) with a special interest in health issues and medical research
  - Developed a position paper '**A view towards increased EU funding for eye research**'
  - Developed **infographic** on economic burden of vision impairment
  - Launched outreach programme to Commissioners and MEPs
  - Developed relationships with third party stakeholders including European Coalition for Vision (**ECV**), European Forum Against Blindness (**EFAB**), and the European Public Health Alliance (**EPHA**)
  - Developed and circulated position paper on **re-classification of fluorescein strips**
  - On an ongoing basis monitored and gathered intelligence on specific calls for proposals from Horizon 2020 and CHAFEA (**The Consumers Health and Food Executive Agency**)

### 2016:

#### OPEN SESSION IN COPENHAGEN:

- EU-EYE President, Einar Stefansson, chaired a **symposium** during the ESCRS, EURETINA & EuCornea Congresses in Copenhagen, highlighting processes and methods to successfully obtain EU research grants. It hosted a panel of experts in this field including those who have successfully accessed research funding at EU level. The event was well attended by delegates from all three congresses.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN:

- 12 October 2016 – EU-EYE co-organised a social media 'selfie' campaign for World Sight Day which leveraged the hashtag #WorldSightDay. This was promoted through the **EU-EYE**, EURETINA, ESCRS and EuCornea websites.

#### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LOBBYING EVENTS:

- 20 April 2016 – EU-EYE co-hosted a dinner and quiz event in the European Parliament, entitled '**Facts, Fiction and Myopic Myths**' which was attended by MEPS, doctors and industry representatives and highlighted common issues with eye health. A number of EU-EYE Board Members presented insights on their own areas of expertise in a bid to promote eye health as a worthy cause for EU funding.
- 15 November 2016 – in conjunction with World Diabetes Day EU-EYE co-organised a **breakfast lobbying event** in the European Parliament. The event was hosted by Marian Harkin MEP and promoted the prevention of eye loss in an ageing population. EU-EYE President, Einar Stefansson, presented the keynote lecture, while a panel of experts, including EU-EYE Secretary Jesper Hjortdal and Vice President, Carlo Traverso, were also on hand to take questions from the audience. EU-EYE secured the sponsorship of Optos who provided a screening device and technician for the event, the results of which were reviewed by ophthalmologists onsite.

## BOARD MEETINGS:

- Three meetings of the Board of EU-EYE (Brussels, January 2016; London, March 2016; Copenhagen, September 2016)
- Three assessment meetings of EU-EYE Board Members and the Burson-Marsteller team at their office in Brussels

## STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT (IN CONJUNCTION WITH BURSON-MARSTELLAR):

- Regular communications with Burson-Marsteller, including bi-annual meetings with the account team, members of EU-EYE Board and Agenda Communications.
- Stakeholder engagement and coalition building, including development of partnerships with key organisations active in the area of eye diseases / ageing / diabetes. In 2016 strong relationships have been established between EU-EYE and the European Forum against Blindness (**EFAB**), European Coalition for Vision (**ECV**) and the Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians (**FODO**) in the belief that a strengthened presence will result in a stronger message.
- Monitoring of relevant EU initiatives including expert panels where openings may be accessed by EU-EYE Board Members to assist with the prioritising of ophthalmology for EU funding.

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## Future EU-EYE Activities to Include:

- Further lobbying events in Brussels and/or Strasbourg to increase the profile of ophthalmology for EU research funding
- Strategic meetings with members of EU-EYE Board and relevant third parties in Brussels
- Expansion of number of member societies who support EU-EYE in a bid to broaden the reach or representation and increase available funds to invest in lobbying
- Expansion of EU-EYE membership to the industry in a bid to strengthen the database of members and increase available funds to invest in lobbying
- Compilation of CVs of EU-EYE Board Member for presentation to the Commission (through a specialised channel through Burson-Marsteller) to access bureaus and expert panel positions through which decisions on funding are taken with the EU
- Applications for EU-EYE Board Members and others to access positions on expert panels (including '**Expert panel for effective means in investing in health**', '**Scientific panel for health**' (SPH) and **H2020 Advisory Group**)
- Adaptation of survey results for external circulation and development of position paper
- Development of infographic for the EU-EYE website
- Preparation of the public consultation on the 'Framework Programme 9' (next research programme that will be launched in Autumn 2016). This is the European-wide research funding programme that will substitute H2020 after the year 2020. The Commission will start drafting next year and it will be key for EU-EYE to give targeted input to this public consultation.
- An outreach programme in Brussels to expand the EU-EYE network with meetings with the Chair of the Scientific Panel for Health (SPH) and/or the Chair of the H2020 Advisory group; and to reengage with previous contacts established in 2015/2016