The Network of European Neuroscience Institutes
- How it originated -

The state of mid-2003

- University College London - 6 groups, mostly funded by the Wellcome Trust
- Göttingen - 4 groups, jointly supported by the University of Göttingen Medical School, the Max Planck Society and Schering Pharmaceutical Company
- First ‘Network’-Meeting in Göttingen
ENI-Net:
A European network

- the Alicante Meeting -

January, 2004

The participating Institutions commit themselves to provide laboratory space and infrastructure for at least 2 Young Investigator Groups

Independence of Young Investigators is monitored by a ‘Steering committee’

Plans for:
Yearly meetings, workshops, and exchange stimulating intensive collaboration
The Aims of ENI-Network Members

• We want to attract the best young investigators from Europe and the US
• We want them to pursue their own scientific ideas
• We believe that ENIs will be attractive for the best because we offer:
  • Independence and excellent working conditions
  • A European and International group spirit
  • An attractive neuroscience scene at each of the locations
Comments by Group Leaders

Quality criteria for junior group conditions

• Autonomy
• Scientific freedom
• Responsibility
• Mentorship
• International Visibility
• Competitive Environment
• Sufficient funding
ENI-Net: A European network, dedicated to the promotion of Young Investigators

Application to Brussels for a Coordination Action in the Neurosciences (Sep. to Nov. 2004):

- Twelve Institutes in 2004, now 16
- 45 Young Investigators approved by the Steering Committee
- 1.4 Mio € granted through a CA for:
  - Yearly meetings
  - Workshops
  - Exchange of students
  - Coordination of joint applications
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1st Goals:

• Promote the independent research of Young Investigators (Career Development)
• Intensify Collaboration and training
• Stimulate Joint Activities, including applications to other programmes of the EU
• Contribute to the establishment of the ‘European Research Area’
Oct. 2008:
ESF APPLICATION
Research Networking Program 2008 Call
-creating interdiscip. fora
-Sharing knowledge and expertise
-developing new techniques
-training young scientists
Example of a typical ENINET Institution:

ENINET-ROME: The European Brain Research Institute

The European Brain Research Institute (EBRI)

Presided by the Nobel Laureate
Prof. Rita Levi Montalcini
EBRI’s Research:

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EBRI’s Mission for Career Development:

- Provides Fully independent positions for Young Investigators (ENINET criteria):
  - YI recruited by international open call (Meritocratic selection)
- Start-up package:
  - Laboratory space
  - Start up budget for equipment, consumables, salaries
  - Full independence for publications, grant submission
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**Goal:**
- Anti-brain drain by offering positions equivalent to Assistant professorship positions in the USA (pioneers in Italy)
Success of EBRI’s approach:

-2005 call: 3 YI selected with international open call:

Dr. Bacci
Italian
Stanford University
ERC SIRG

Dr. Marie
French
Stanford University

Dr. Delcroix
French
Stanford University
Typical Profile of an ENINET YI
e.g. Dr. Marie

- **Education/positions:**
  - Undergraduate in Edinburgh University, UK
  - Ph.D. at University College London, UK
    (Wellcome Trust 4 Year PhD programme in Neuroscience)
  - Post-doctoral fellowship at Stanford University, USA
    (4 ½ Years)
  - Group leader at EBRI, Italy (3 years now)

- **Research Interests:**
  - Identification of the Molecular Mechanisms of Memory formation (basic)
  - Identification of the molecular Mechanisms leading to Alzheimer’s disease (translational)

- **Techniques:**
  - *In vivo* expression of protein in the brain using viral systems
  - *In vitro* brain slice electrophysiology
  - Behavioral analysis of memory
YIs of the ENINET Institutions: Who are we?

- 60% YI of ENINET performed Post-doctoral fellowships in North America

- 90% YI set up independent laboratory in Institute different from their Thesis Host

Anti-brain drain efforts & Mobility of Researchers
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  - Different levels: e.g. Genetics, Physiology, In vivo behavior
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  - Different Techniques: e.g. Electrophysiology, EM, in vivo calcium imaging
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NETWORK IS VITAL TO HELP US ESTABLISH OURSELVES AS INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATORS IN EUROPE
Gender Issues: The situation in the ENINET:

-25 % ENINET YI are WOMEN between 30-40 years old

  → Starting off their independent careers
  but need to adjust professional life with Maternity leave/Child Care

What has been done to resolve this issue:

- Little action taken by national bodies and EU:

  e.g. New ERC SIRG application age limit pushed by 1 year per child
  (normally limit of 8 years post-PhD)

- Proposed by ENINET (but not funded by EU programme):

  - Help with child care during meetings & in host institutions during
    first years of life when children cannot attend public school