

Neuroinformatics

Dear L&G

First warm welcome in our offices, a new building in 2001 for a new organisation ZonMw. Two former separated organisations merged into ZonMw, now not only promoting innovation of knowledge about the mechanisms and epidemiology of disease, but also innovation of prevention of disease and health care.

It was long before 2001 that Jaap came to my predecessor EK and drew our attention towards the GSF and neuroinformatics. At that time we did not know what it was and how important it would be. But luckily Jaap convinced EK to financially support him to be able to attend all meetings of the working group around the world. Jaap will inform you about that in great detail in the next presentation.

Very happy that we did so and continued this support throughout the years, since:

- First, the initiative itself developed into a mature well-documented global appeal to build on an international neuroinformatics coordination facility**
- Second, the initiative has been incorporated into a special programme of the ESF about Networking European Neuroscience. The ESF programme is aimed to develop integrated research in general, with special emphasis on associated international training schemes for young European scientists. In this programme a similar nodal network is proposed as in the neuroinformatics initiative and in this way could well become an integrated part of the ESF programme.**
- Third, Neuroinformatics was a well recognized topic on the September 2003 Conference on Structuring European Neuroscience organised by the EC in Brussel. A special presentation was devoted to neuroinformatics. I had a chance to meet with Busquin personally, and he confirmed that this conference was certainly meant as a start-up for FP7, as a response to the criticism that after a European Decade of the Brain brain research as such was missing in the present FP6.**

So, in my opinion neuroinformatics is an important and timely topic, which can be pushed forward only by a strong multidisciplinary cooperation. So I very much expect that at the end of this day you all agree on a common strategy to move forward firmly from here. I am very anxious to know what you all have to say about it.

I cannot attend the whole day, but I leave you in the good hands of Jaap en Gerrit, who did all their best to prepare this day, and as I know them, it will certainly be an effective meeting, resulting in concrete actions. I wish you a very fruitful discussion.

Dr. E. Beem
Co-director ZonMw