

## Newsletter April 2011

Dear Colleagues

At long last spring seems to be on the way! It's been a long, hard winter in most parts of Europe and I am sure that we are all looking forward to some warm weather and sunshine.

The onset of spring also means that we are nearing the time for the ESCIF Congress. As you probably all know by now, this year's Congress and Assembly of Delegates is taking place in De Rijp in the Netherlands from 18 – 20 May. The last update from the conference organisers and hosts, Dwarslaesie Organisatie, reported that over 80 people from 22 countries will be attending the event!

The members of both the ESCIF Executive and the Congress organising committee are delighted that there is so much interest from our member organisations and we are really looking forward to welcoming you to De Rijp.

As planned at the last Congress the SCI research working group has been very busy gathering information in order to create a new section on the website. The aim is to provide accessible information about "unproven therapies" for functional recovery after SCI – but also to give updates on research that seems to offer real possibilities based on scientific clinical trials. The section will be available very soon.

Hope to see you in May!

On behalf of the ESCIF Executive

Regards

Jane



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## Contents

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ESCIF Congress 2011 in de Rijp, The Netherlands

Information-gathering project on MRSA

Nordic Spinal Cord Society (NoSCoS) meeting 2011

International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS) meeting 2011

Elections for the ESCIF Executive

EDF News

Airline policies

## ESCIF Congress 2011 in de Rijp, the Netherlands

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Welcome to the  
2011 ESCIF Congress and  
Assembly of Delegates  
18 – 20 May  
in The Netherlands.



Documents for the 6<sup>th</sup> ESCIF Congress will be sent out to all participants by mail in advance of the Congress. They will be sent to the e-mail address that you stated on the registration form.

Please print out the documents and bring them with you to De Rijp.

## Information-gathering project on MRSA

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As we informed you in the January edition of ESCIF Newsletter we intend to launch an information-gathering project on MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*). The reason is that MRSA is fast becoming a problem for the health care system in Europe and all over the world. Having looked into the matter further, we have decided to expand the survey to include the *E.coli* and *Klebsiella* since they represent an even greater risk to the SCI population. These bacteria exist everywhere in society and they are rapidly becoming more and more resistant to antibiotics. Persons with SCI are considered as one of the risk groups.

There is no coordination between the health care systems in Europe on how to handle the problem with MRSA and, therefore, the guidelines in the different European countries vary. The Netherlands and the Nordic countries are the most successful countries in preventing MRSA with an incidence rate of 1 %.

The idea behind the information-gathering project is to collect a body of information so that ESCIF can pass this on to people living with SCI and to health professionals working with people with SCI.

## Nordic Spinal Cord Society (NoSCoS) meeting 2011

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The Nordic Spinal Cord Society (NoSCoS) will hold their biannual meeting in Gothenburg this coming autumn. ESCIF will host a hearing

on the benefits of centralisation of SCI treatment and rehabilitation. The hearing will close the congress and is the only session open both to the congress delegates and the public. We will present the ESCIF policy on centralisation and the findings of the working group. The panel will include a representative from Finland who will describe the process that led up to the recent decision taken by the Finnish parliament to centralise the care for SCI people in the country. For more information of the NoSCoS meeting go to [www.noscoss2011.com](http://www.noscoss2011.com).

## International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS) meeting 2011

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As a further step towards promoting a global network of SCI consumers, Jane Horsewell and Frans Penninx will attend the joint

meeting of The American Spinal Injury Association (ASIA) and the International Spinal Cord Injury Society (ISCoS) in Washington DC in June.

## Elections for the ESCIF Executive

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The Assembly of Delegates will be asked to elect a member to the ESCIF Executive. Winnifred de Moes, ESCIF's current Vice President, has been on the Executive for four years and has therefore served her first term of office. She is allowed to remain on the Executive for a further four years if she is re-elected. Winnifred is willing to stand for re-election.

All member organisations are, of course, allowed to nominate candidates for election. If you wish to do so, we would appreciate it (for practical reasons) if you would inform Urs Styger before the Congress.

## EDF News

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To make it easier for ESCIF members to follow interesting news from the European Disability Forum (EDF) Pietro Barbieri, a member of the Executive, will make a selection of news with special interest to people with SCI and post it on the ESCIF website.

If you are interested in reading all the news from EDF, you can subscribe on the EDF website, [www.edf-feph.org](http://www.edf-feph.org).

## Survey on airline policies

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ESCIF has carried out a brief overview in the form of a first round of search on the internet.

The overview shows that every airline observes the rules of the EC and the ACAA. But most companies rely on the safety rules. Under these rules they may require a disabled passenger to travel with an escort or attendant.

A short survey among the members of ESCIF could, perhaps, give us a better insight into how the different airline policies in Europe are implemented. We will consult with EDF to ask for their opinion on REGULATION (EC) No 1107/2006 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, of 5 July 2006, concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air. Depending on the answer from EDF we might launch a short survey.