Letter

A New Chapter in the History of SRNT: The Formation of the European Chapter of SRNT (SRNT-E)—A Letter from the Presidents of SRNT and SRNT Europe

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During the last annual meeting of the SRNT Europe in Bath (UK), an important event in the history of SRNT took place. On September 6, Caryn Lerman (President of SRNT) and Christian Chiamulera (Past President of SRNT Europe) signed the agreement that established the formation of the first SRNT Chapter, the SRNT-Europe (SRNT-ESP).

A brief look into the history of the Society may help us to appreciate the importance of this event. Since 1998, when the first European conference of SRNT was organized by Karl Fagerström in Copenhagen, SRNT Europe has been a group of European members mainly active in the organization of the annual SRNT Europe meetings. Well-attended and successful conferences were hosted in London, Paris, Spain, and many other locations, typically in September/October. These meetings attracted members not only from the region but also from North America. Importantly, the SRNT Europe meetings have afforded an opportunity for researchers from non-European and developing countries to attend SRNT conferences and contribute their expertise. It could be said that the SRNT Europe meetings are now a bridge between North America and different regional areas in the field of nicotine and tobacco research. At the organizational level, the first SRNT Europe Board was established in 2001, with Karl Fagerström as its chair, for the management of the annual meeting organization. By-laws were adopted in 2006 in order to better define rules and procedures of SRNT Europe activities. Seven board members were elected by European SRNT members for a 3-year term.

Duties were also assigned within the Board, such as President, President-elect, Treasurer, etc. These internal by-laws were adopted smoothly and are now incorporated into the new chapter.

In the last few years, however, it became clear that SRNT Europe was simply a subset of members within SRNT, and not a legally registered entity, organizing events without any clearly established accountability in regard to its own activities. Therefore, there was the need to formalize the group and its activities within a more global strategy of SRNT. SRNT Europe past-Presidents, Jacques Le Houezec and Marcus Munafò, raised the issue and started the discussion within the European board and with SRNT past-President Sue Curry and executive director Bruce Wheeler. Early this year, the SRNT Board and Bruce Wheeler proposed as a solution the establishment of an European chapter as a formal self-managed group within SRNT. During this, the “Mother SRNT” and the European boards worked together to write the definitive version of the chapter agreement, an endeavor that was eventually formalized with Presidents’ signature in September in Bath, England. The foundation of the SRNT-E Europe Chapter is also an important milestone in efforts toward the “internationalization” of SRNT.

The SRNT-E Europe Chapter is now in the process of taking initial “formal” steps. Shortly, the chapter will be registered in a European country. The new European Board, now chaired by Sakire Pogun, is working on the list of Chapter activities, which will be approved very soon and announced to the membership. SRNT-E Europe, with support and input from its members, chapter will continue organizing annual SRNT Europe meetings as one of its major activities (we hope to welcome you all at the next meeting in Antalya, Turkey, http://www.srnteu2011.org); additionally, non-conference-related activities are being planned. The latter will include educational and training initiatives throughout Europe, establishing relationships and collaborations with EU agencies, national scientific associations, and the FCTC. Areas of interest will include, but not be limited to, tobacco control policy and increased funding support for nicotine and tobacco research.

All European members of SRNT will be able to “opt out” of the Europe Chapter membership at the time of dues renewal of SRNT membership (a prerequisite). All non-European members will have the ability to “opt-in.” The need to raise funds to support activities of the Europe Chapter requires a small additional fee (15 USD and 5 USD, respectively, for regular and...
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student members) in addition to the SRNT membership fee. In return, Chapter members will get an additional discount on registration for the European meetings and related activities.

We are pleased about with the potential growth of SRNT membership throughout Europe, which we believe will result from formation of a clearly identified European Chapter of the Society as a result. The SRNT-E Europe Chapter Board is looking forward to finding ways to involve as many members in these activities as possible. A successful promotion of nicotine and tobacco research throughout Europe will be achieved only with the direct involvement of members from different regions and countries. We are convinced that efficient programs of research, education, and advocacy rely on a distributed network of members and a bottom-up projects rather than top-down initiatives.

The new chapter in the history book of SRNT is just open. It is now a duty for all of us, not only in Europe but worldwide, to contribute to the further development of SRNT. A society that is growing in memberships and conference attendance each year is now becoming a real “International” society that represents scientists and professionals throughout the world.