

BAW 2009 REPORT



1) Title of the event:

BAW at the European Parliament in Brussels, March 18

2) Introduction:

It is thanks to the dates coincidence of BAW and European Parliament session in Brussels and the kind welcome by Philippe Busquin, member of the European Parliament that such a special day at the EP could happen. One of the challenge being to organize the entrance of students in accordance with Security rules.

3) Concept:

The event was organized with STOA (Science and Technology Options Assessment) and divided in two parts:

- During the morning 130 young students (14 -18 years old) from 10 secondary schools from 5 cities (Beauraing, Brussels, Charleroi, Dinant and Namur) visited the E.P. and had a 40 min presentation by Mr. François Brunagel of Europe has it stands and what it achieved in 65 years of peace in Europe. At 11:00 a conference “From stem cells to neural circuits: Mechanisms and perspectives for brain dideases” was given by Pierre Vanderhaeghen (Université Libre de Bruxelles) followed by questions/responses by students and members of the Parliament.





From right to left: **Pierre Vanderhaeghen**, speaker, **Philippe Busquin**, member of the European Parliament, STOA President, former EU Commissioner for Research, **Roland Pochet**, EDAB member, **Theodoros Karapiperis**, STOA member

- The afternoon was dedicated to a debate “From Stem cells to neuroethics” at which a panel of experts in neuroethics participated including Pr. Goran Hermeren, President of the European Ethics Group and Dr. Michael Rogers, specialist in neuroethics. A teleconference was also established between Oxford and EP with Pr. Julian Savulescu during the debate. This debate was particularly timely because of the Stem Cells Executive Order signed March 9 by President Obama.

4) Conclusion

The morning participants were enthusiastic and I received many mails of acknowledgment amongst them one clearly stated that after the conference several vocation for brain research raised.

A whole page in the well known journal "Le Soir" was dedicated to Brain research (see attached)

Another conclusion can be find in the mail I received from STOA secretary, see below:

*Thread-Topic: Acknowledgement Thread-Index: From: "KARAPIPERIS Theodoros" <theodoros.karapiperis@europarl.europa.eu>
To: "Roland Pochet" <rpochet@ulb.ac.be>
Dear Roland,*

I am writing to express, also on behalf of Mr. Busquin, STOA's sincerest thanks for the very successful event you helped us organise at the European Parliament. Both the lecture by Prof. Vanderhaeghen and the afternoon debate with the most eminent collection of bioethics experts were a unique experience in the European Parliament, setting a new standard for similar events in the future. The presence of all the young people in the lecture added a very positive and forward-looking element to the event and underlined the close links that the Parliament pursues with civil society. All this would have not been possible without your commitment and hard work.

I do hope that this first experience will not stand alone, but will be the first step in a lasting cooperation between STOA and the medical and bioethics community. In fact STOA, in cooperation with several French public research organisations, is organising a lunch-debate in Strasbourg tomorrow, with the participation of Ms. Barr Sinoussi, Nobel Prize laureate for medicine in 2008, on the occasion the forthcoming vote on the proposal for a Directive on the Protection of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes.

*Kind regards,
Theo*

5) Acknowledgments

I thank FENS organisation and the BBC for financial support. The budget will be used to reimburse the travel expenses (train) made to allow students coming from different Belgian cities to attend.

Roland Pochet, March 31, 2009