

## **Statement of Matthew Walker for election to Commission of European Affairs (ILAE-CEA)**

The ILAE-CEA has played a central and crucial role in epilepsy education, research and advocacy within Europe, and I am thus honoured to be nominated for election to the ILAE-CEA. If elected, I will strive to promote the future growth of the ILAE-CEA. My priorities are in three particular areas:

*1. Education:* The ILAE-CEA contribution to education includes the European Congresses, which go from strength to strength, and the more focused European meetings such as the migrating courses, the Eilat course, the San-Servolo course, and the Status Epilepticus colloquium. I see the need to continue to develop and expand such courses, not only for those already dedicated to epilepsy work but also for younger physicians and scientists in order to encourage the very best to join our epilepsy community. This will come not only from more focused meetings, especially aimed at early career physicians and scientists, but also from mentoring and exchanges in Europe. Moreover, I would support a bottom-up, grassroots approach to education, so that the CEA educational portfolio can represent the needs of all the European chapters. Absolutely key is the greater availability of bursaries so that many can share in these educational programmes.

*2. Research:* One of the most gratifying and inspirational aspects of epilepsy research has been the close collaborations forged across Europe with the EU FP7 collaborative grants, which were partly the result of ILAE-CEA activity - but collaborations also need to be fostered outside of this scheme. In particular, programmes for PhD students and young researchers to spend time in other centres in Europe need to be encouraged.

*3. Advocacy:* Epilepsy has remained a 'Cinderella' condition. ILAE-CEA has had a considerable impact on epilepsy advocacy in Europe. Lobbying at the European Parliament has resulted in both an EU FP7 call for epilepsy research and also the Written Declaration on Epilepsy in the European Parliament. These are great achievements and should now be built upon. One key element is the closer collaboration of the ILAE-CEA with other charitable organisations in Europe, which would assist in lobbying for both research and also improved patient care.

I am both an active physician and scientist, specialising in epilepsy care and research. I currently am Head of the Epilepsy Department at UCL Institute of Neurology and the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery. This is one of the most clinically and research active units in Europe. I am totally committed to translational research and serve on the Commission on Neurobiology of Disease of ILAE, the Task Force on Translational Research of ILAE, and the Working Group on Recommendations for Preclinical Epilepsy Drug Discovery. I also play an active role in education within University College London, chairing the Master's course in Clinical Neuroscience, and externally through talks, seminars and the organization of epilepsy meetings. I am an associate editor of *Epilepsia*, and have published extensively on both clinical and translational epilepsy research. I am Treasurer of the ILAE British Branch and Chair of the Joint Epilepsy Council of UK and Ireland.

The European chapters have made an outstanding contribution to the ILAE's mission. Europe is ideally placed to lead the world in epilepsy research and care, not least because of the diverse nature, open-mindedness and energy of the people involved. If elected, I will aim to foster these strengths, to continue these legacies and to strengthen and develop the role of the CEA.