

Preface

This special issue of *Collegium Antropologicum* supplements is the second Neuroscience supplement published in this journal. As the previous one from 2008 (http://www.collantropol.hr/?id_0=2&year_id=480&vol_id=488) it also extends the work presented at the Third Croatian Congress of Neuroscience (<http://www.hiim.hr/nova/Knjiga.pdf>).

The Third congress was also organized by Croatian Society for Neuroscience (CSFN), which was founded in 2001 and at present has almost 300 members of highly interdisciplinary profile in the fields of both basic and clinical neuroscience as well as related disciplines (ranging from biology, physics, neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, neuropharmacology, neurogenetics, neuropathology, pediatric neurology, neurology, neurosurgery, neuroradiology and psychiatry to psychology, linguistics, phonetics, and speech therapy).

The primary mission of those special issues of *Collegium Antropologicum* was to promote neuroscience and to extend the network of brain and mind research in Croatia. A significant increase in number of contributions to this second special issue demonstrates that we are progressing well and that the CSFN represents a productive and vigorously growing community of researchers. We are proud to note that there is not only an increase in the number of participants, but also a more extensive involvement of researchers from various disciplines. Obviously, our community increasingly recognizes not only the fundamental scientific impact of brain research, but also its important clinical implications – even in various biomedical fields which were not traditionally related to neuroscience. Major technological and methodological advances over the past decade have introduced new dimensions to brain research and display an ever increasing impact on the society. This trend is particularly prominent in the case of functional neuroimaging. However, it seems that this aspect of neuroscience still remains insufficiently appreciated in the Croatian academic and research environment. Such unwelcome state of affairs needs to be changed by our swift and concerted effort – otherwise we may risk a significant lag in comparison to the international neuroscience community, which would be hard to catch up. This is one of main reasons to dedicate the Brain Awareness Week in Croatia 2011 to promoting and publicly disseminating exciting findings of cutting-edge neuroscience research to the general public.

While the primary goal of publishing these special issues has been to promote neuroscience research in Croatia, it should be noted that the first special issue already

had a significant international impact. Over the past two years, many papers published in the first special »neuroscience« issue of the *Collegium Antropologicum* received at least one international citation, and some of them received five or more citations already during the first year – including the citations in the leading international journals such as *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience*, *Trends in Neurosciences*, *Journal of Neuroscience*, *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, *Experimental Neurology*, *Current Opinion in Neurology*, *Brain Research Reviews*, *Trends in Genetics*, *Human Genetics*, *Journal of Pediatrics*, *Seminars in Perinatology*, *American Journal of Physiology – Cell Physiology*, and the *FASEB Journal*. In addition, several authors of contributions to the first special issue have been invited to submit solicited review articles to leading journals in the respective field of expertise. This clearly demonstrates that several neuroscience groups in Croatia are internationally recognized as leading expert groups in their respective fields, while many others are also well recognized in their subfields. Thus, as our neuroscientists try hard to cope with chronic lack of funding and nevertheless manage to produce internationally recognized publications, we are entitled to expect and require greater recognition of neuroscience on part of the Croatian Ministry of Science, Education & Sport and to plead for the establishment of Croatian center of excellence in neuroscience.

On the other hand, in 2010 we had to face a tragic death of Branimir Jernej, one of our leading neuroscientists and the Vice-President of the CSFN. We also use this opportunity to remember Branko Dobrović, another promising but tragically lost Croatian neuroscientist. Thanks to the effort of his former mentor, professor Marija Heffer Lauc, results of Branko's research are published in this issue. We also used the opportunity to publish a tribute to Jelena Krmpotić Nemanić, who was a pioneer of neuroscience research in Croatia.

Finally, we wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Editor-in-Chief and the Editorial Board of *Collegium Antropologicum* for kindly offering us the opportunity to present results of our research in a single thematic volume. We also use this opportunity to invite our colleagues in the field of anthropology to join the membership of the Croatian Society for Neuroscience and thus enhance the interaction of two frontiers of research equally dedicated to explaining the evolutionary origins as well as the developmental underpinnings of the uniquely human mind/brain.

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