

Portuguese Society of Biomedical Engineering (SPEB)



The Portuguese Society of Biomedical Engineering (SPEB) was created in January, 25th, 1989, almost one year after the first Portuguese Biomedical Engineering conference, BioEng'88, took place. At the time of creation the society had 89 members and was essentially an association of people doing research in Biomedical Engineering, with special emphasis in Biomedical signal processing and Biomaterials. Since then eight national Biomedical Engineering conferences took place and the society has had four different directive boards, with the present one incorporating people from most major universities in the country with Biomedical engineering groups. The areas of interest have grown, including, among others, Biomechanics, Medical Imaging, Medical Informatics and Tissue Engineering. In 2001, the first undergraduate degrees in Biomedical Engineering were created in Portugal and the Portuguese BME community was faced with a new challenge: the appearance of a new professional career in Biomedical Engineering. At the moment there are 8 universities and 4 polytechnics offering undergraduate Biomedical Engineering degrees.

Portugal still does not have professional Clinical Engineers, and their acceptance should be one of the challenges of SPEB. The Portuguese society has been affiliated to IFMBE for many years and recently has become more actively involved in the Federation.

For the near future SPEB plans to become a more representative society in the field with several actions planned which involve: increasing the number of its members, mainly from the undergraduate and newly graduated students; create a Biomedical Engineering Education and certification group with links to BIOMEDEA; create contacts with the various BME companies in the country; establish a more regular Portuguese BEM conference; strengthen the links with other societies, like the Medical Physics Division of the Portuguese Physical Society and the Portuguese Biomechanics Society; fight for the creation of a Clinical Engineering profession in Portugal and its acceptance within the medical community; strengthen even more the links with European and International organisations.