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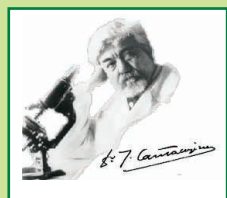
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Dear microbiology colleagues,

The **Federation of European Microbiological Societies** celebrates this year 30 years of its activity in Europe. It has become recognised and respected in the field with its devotion to the promotion of microbiology in Europe. In the last five years the federation added 12 societies to its membership and now encircles 46 microbiological societies from 36 states connecting more than 40,000 members. Through its mission FEMS fosters professional exchange and stimulates an open and collaborative spirit nourished by the diversity of European culture, encouraging joint activities, facilitating communication among microbiologists, supporting meetings and laboratory courses, providing fellowships, and publishing journals and books.

Yes, one could see that microbiology is advancing fast and is coping efficiently with the questions. It is without a doubt that the year 2004 is the year of food safety. Does this statement meet reality? If we see how many congresses of this kind are taking place in Europe, we cannot ignore this fact. If we search for activities in this field we can find dozens of excellent meetings on this issue. If we go to practical trainings in this area, it is no doubt that safety is there again. Altogether, safety is not just microbiology but it has a strong and long-lasting connection to it.

It is like Europe that is integrated and connected to numerous countries in the east and south. It is difficult to draw the borderline between what is in and what is out. This is not just a question of geography. Like in safety it is not just microbiology, which makes food and water safe or not safe. We have to respect also chemical and physical risks that are all the time there but without the possibility to multiply. The European geographical surface cannot be multiplied as well. But countries, states or recognized nations are growing in the last decades. At the time when FEMS was founded only 33 states existed in geographical Europe. Today we have at least 44 countries. However, if we consult FEMS statute borders for Europe, we have even more countries in our European microbiological destination. In 1974 we had a clear situation in the east and southeast. We had just one state there. Today it is different and some of these countries are still on a waiting list to enter our Federation. We are welcoming them and we help them to reach the mature state to enter the Federation. This process will take some time but we can envision in near future Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Malta, Moldavia, and probably countries around Caucasus, as new members.

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FEMS Meetings Calendar

2004

8th Avian Immunology Research Group Meeting

2004 September 4–7
München, Germany

Halophiles 2004 International Conference on Halophilic Micro-organisms

2004 September 4–8
Ljubljana, Slovenia

Acinetobacter 2004

2004 September 15–17
Dublin, Ireland

Recombinant Protein Production: A Comparative View on Host Physiology

2004 November 11–14
Algarve, Portugal

2005

Molecular Basis of Bacterial Pathogenesis

2005 January 21–25
Israel

Microbes: Replication, Prevention and Use

2005 April 7–9
Wurzburg, Germany

European Study Group on Molecular Biology of Picornaviruses (EUROPIC 2005)

2005 May 23–29
Lunten, Netherlands

Analysis of Microbial Cell at the Single Cell Level

2005 May 26–28
Semmering, Austria

Vector-borne emerging and re-emerging pathogens and their infections

2005 June 4–7
Istanbul, Turkey

8th Symposium on Bacterial Genetics and Ecology

2005 June 26–29
Lyon, France

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Europe experienced a political enlargement in the European Union this year, opening new possibilities for the next enlargement in future. This step will also influence FEMS activities since FEMS could now also be involved in networking of science and expertise within these countries around Europe. Our colleagues, microbiologists from all branches, are expecting that FEMS will do more. There are many challenges in this mission for today and for the future. In particular for all safety issues, from food to medical and to environment, I picture FEMS as a key player in the forthcoming actions in research, standardization and education and other issues important to Europeans.

When we celebrate 30 years of activities and expertise in all fields of microbiology we still have some high expectation for deepening our knowledge and spreading our activities and services in geographical Europe. A good reason to look forward to new challenges in the next decade.

Ljubljana, May 1, 2004



Dr Peter Raspor
FEMS Circular Chief Editor

Development of Biocontrol Agents of Fungal Diseases for Commercial Applications in Food Production Systems

March 24–27, 2004
Sevilla, Spain
FEMS Meeting Support Grant



A total of 122 delegates, coming from 28 different countries, were registered in this workshop. This event has provided the opportunity to extensively discuss and talk about Disease Biocontrol. The Workshop joined a very important group of biocontrol experts around the world, including researchers and industrial representatives. This has provided excellent scenery to discuss together the last scientific advances and the practical feasibility of Disease Biocontrol. During the Practical application of Biocontrol Agents session, a Round Table Discussion was organized under the

subject "Registration of Biocontrol Agents". The moderator was Prof. Johan Schnürer from Sweden. It was a fruitful session with extensive participation of the workshop attendants. In this session it was decided to elaborate a document, a letter addressed to the European Commission in order to evaluate the problems of biocontrol-agents registration in Europe emphasizing the differences in relation to other countries from the rest of the world and propose some changes and new ideas. This letter is being written and will be distributed online to interested professionals in order to be signed and submitted to the European Union.

Prof. Inmaculada Viñas-Almenar
Lleida, Spain



FEMS Meetings Calendar

3rd International Conference on the Biology of Nocardia
2005 July 5–7 Lyon, France

4th International Gordon Conference on Molybdenum and Tungsten Enzymes
2005 July 10–15
Oxford, UK

Pseudomonas 2005
2005 August 27–31
Marseille, France

22nd International Conference on Yeast Genetics and Molecular Biology
2005 August 7–12
Bratislava, Slovakia

9th Symposium on Aquatic Microbial Ecology (SAME-9)
2005 August 21–26
Helsinki, Finland

2nd International Conference on Enterococci (ASM-FEMS)
2005 August 28–31
Helsingør, Denmark

8th Symposium on Lactic Acid Bacteria
2005 August 28 – September 1
Egmond aan Zee, Netherlands

13th International Biodeterioration & Biodegradation Symposium (IBBS-13)
2005 September 4–9
Madrid, Spain

Summer School on: "Bioavailability and microbial transformation of pollutants in sediments and approaches to stimulate their in situ biodegradation"
2005 September 12–14
Genoa, Italy

Full information on these meetings at:
www.fems-microbiology.org
> Events > FEMS Meetings

2nd FEMS Congress in Madrid in 2006

The 2nd FEMS Congress of the European microbiologists is planned to be held in Madrid (Spain), July 4–8, 2006. All the European microbiologists are requested to reserve these dates in view of their attendance to this important event which certainly will be successful and rewarding both at the scientific and social level. Further - and more definitive - information will be available in the next months on the FEMS website.



The 31th Council meeting will take place in Bergen, Norway, on Saturday September 11, 2004.

Undergraduate Microbiology at the University of Ljubljana – Ten Years of Experience ^{1/2}

The reason for establishing a new curriculum for microbiology at Ljubljana University ten years ago was the growing interest for life sciences in both public and academic sectors. The founding was influenced by experiences from abroad, where unique microbiology curricula

microbiology, immunology, molecular biology, biotechnology and environmental sciences. The first idea and a rough outline of the programme were revealed already in 1989 at a round table of the 6th Yugoslav Congress of Microbiology in Maribor and published later the same year¹. The

profession. Enrolment quota was planned under conduct of Slovenian Microbiology Society with various stakeholders like representatives from industry, Chamber of Commerce and individual members, i.e., microbiology alumni. An agreement was reached to enrol 50 students per year in a four-year programme ending in the fifth year with a graduation thesis and a Diploma in Microbiology. The programme was compared and made compatible with some of the curricula at universities in Great Britain, France, Germany and Switzerland. After a lasting procedure of professional and administrative assessment of the proposed programme at the Faculty and University levels and at the Ministerial Council for Higher Education, the Biotechnical Faculty gained governmental permit for the first enrolment in 1993.

STUDENT'S OPINION

"In 1995, I joined the undergraduate Microbiology at the University of Ljubljana and so made part of the third generation of this new programme. I was proud to be involved in the first steps of a young study that would introduce microbiology into minds of young people who have to make decisions among numerous scientific study opportunities.

microbial mechanisms within a plant without knowing plant physiology? I realized that microbiology was indeed a specific study that demanded from a student comprehensive previous knowledge in natural sciences and deductive thinking. It was not until the fourth year of the study that a distinct feeling of devotion and appreciation of



Kaja Gnezda taking samples for her microbiology research project.

the microbial world has grown in me. Probably that feeling came late because of some confusion and disorder in arrangement of the study at the beginning, which perhaps can be expected from a programme in its childhood. I collected pieces of knowledge in a somewhat disorganized manner, until I suddenly stood in front of the complete puzzle, which gave me a comfortable and relaxed feeling. All in all, the build-up of microbiological knowledge through the first four years had a good potential in preparing me for the final fifth year, that is my own research project.

I am honored that the undergraduate study of Microbiology in Slovenia has been developing itself in front of my eyes. I had the opportunity to meet, listen and talk to Prof. France Megusar, the father of the microbiology study in my country, giving his last lectures in physiology of microorganisms; I witnessed the transitions of this study from mainly lectures and seminars to quality interface between theory and highly upgraded practical courses. Certainly, the undergraduate study of Microbiology in Slovenia has already entered its maturation period."

existed already for years, and by good experience with a postgraduate microbiology (MSc) programme, which has been organised jointly by Biotechnical and Medical Faculty of Ljubljana University and has been running for over 25 years.

The strategic goal of the undergraduate programme was to accommodate the growing requirements for graduates in

presentation triggered broad discussions and gained major support of the idea. Microbiology Curricular Board at the Biotechnical Faculty was appointed soon after and supplementary goals were added: to create a model for innovative teaching and learning approaches and to establish the greatest possible interdisciplinary and inter-institutional cooperation between science and

Programme

The subjects of the first year of the undergraduate microbiology study aim at conforming the students to the training regime at university level, motivating them for the later curricular topics and updating the basic knowledge of mathematics, chemistry, cell biology, physical chemistry, biochemistry and English language. The goals in the second study year are to deepen the knowledge of general biology using microbial cell as a model, to transform the static teaching mode (answering the question: what?) to a dynamic understanding of functioning (answering the question: how?) by resolving the regulation of the cell and to upgrade the skills in IT. Compulsory courses are molecular biology, microbial morphology, biophysics, microbial biochemistry, molecular evolution, statistics, and computing. Courses in the third year mediate to the students the "professional credo" of a microbiologist.

They aim at building-up understanding of biological diversity and ecological relations. Identification of students' special interests is promoted.

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(Advertisement)



Undergraduate Microbiology at the University of Ljubljana – Ten Years of Experience ^{2/2}

Continued from page 3

The courses topics cover immunology, microbial physiology, identification and taxonomy, virology, microbial communities, and microbial genetics. In the fourth year the students select their own direction of study by choosing elective subjects. All students take three common courses, i.e. microbes and pathogenesis, microbial ecology, and microbial biotechnology. In addition, six elective courses must be followed. Those who select Medical and sanitary microbiology as their study field take classes in viral diseases, bacterioses, mycoses, parasitology, sanitary microbiology and general epidemiology. Those who decide for Microbial ecology as their field of study take courses in soil microbiology, water microbiology, sediment microbiology, microbiology of the digestive tract and geomicrobiology, and those who decide for Microbial biotechnology attend bioprocessing, immunotechnologies, food biotechnology,

biomass and secondary metabolites, environmental biotechnology and economics in biotechnology courses.

Up to now, this microbiology study has produced over 130 Diploma graduates. Each year roughly 30% graduates continue their studies in MSc programmes in microbiology, biotechnology, molecular biology, etc. A number of them have found places at various postgraduate schools in Europe and in the USA. By now several graduates have already received their MSc and even PhD diplomas.

Future plans

We hope that in the coming years our graduates, when they will be recognized experts in industry and government, or those, who continue their postgraduate studies at universities at home and abroad will, with their excellence, further promote our microbiology study. The programme was presented in June 1999 at the Gordon's Research conference "Undergraduate microbiology education"

at Connecticut College in New London, USA, where it launched interesting and provocative discussions, mainly under the heading "how we can motivate students with such a comprehensive programme". In future we hope to bring the programme closer to the European ones. We see prospective future in organising a regional or even European Microbiology Network that would further the Bologna Process and alleviate the road toward The European Higher Education Area also for Microbiology.

¹ F.V. Nekrep: Theses for planning an undergraduate microbiological curriculum at the Biotechnical Faculty in Ljubljana; Zbornik BF, UL, Kmetijstvo, 54 (1989) 27 – 42.

Prof. Dr Franc Viktor Nekrep
University of Ljubljana,
Biotechnical Faculty
(franc.nekrep@bfro.uni-lj.si)

YOUNG RESEARCHER'S CORNER

Real marzipan!



Daria Podkopaeva

Daria Podkopaeva spent six weeks at the Institut für Allgemeine Mikrobiologie, Christian-Albrecht-Universität-Kiel, Germany in October/ November 2003. At present she is both a researcher at the Voronezh State University, Biology

Faculty, Voronezh, Russia and a PhD student from the Institute of Microbiology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia.

"At present, a lot of laboratories and scientific centres all over the world are involved in studies in the field of thermophilic microorganism physiology and biochemistry. The exchange of experience between laboratories located in different countries allows the scientists to enlarge their knowledge. The FEMS Fellowship I won gave me the possibility of visiting Prof. Dr P. Schoenheit's laboratory (Institut für Allgemeine Mikrobiologie der Christian-Albrechts-Universität in Kiel, Germany). Under his guidance, I spent a month and a half investigating the metabolism peculiarities of a new thermophilic bacterium *Nautilia lithotrophica*. The friendly atmosphere in

the laboratory and the assistance of colleagues allowed me to obtain the results that will be used as a basis for our collaborative article. This visit enabled me to master new methods of biochemical investigations and gave me a chance to see Kiel. This beautiful town is located on the Baltic Sea coast and has a rich scientific and cultural history. I enjoyed visiting the place where a well-known biochemist Meyerhof, Nobel laureate, worked and I had the opportunity to visit Lübeck, an old town belonging to the world cultural heritage of UNESCO, home town of Thomas Mann and Willy Brandt and now the place of residence of Günter Grass (i.e., three Nobel laureates in Lübeck). I got acquainted with German culture and, of course, tasted real marzipan. The internship in Prof. Dr P. Schoenheit's laboratory was my first experience of research work in a foreign laboratory. This trip enabled me to obtain not only scientific but also life experience, gave me a unique chance of contacting the people interested in the same scientific area as me.

It is common knowledge that science is not limited by any borders. Now I can say for sure that fellowships like the FEMS one do implement this idea into practice by supporting the scientists, especially young scientists, who want to have an internship in a foreign laboratory."

Grant Applications

Applications for Research Fellowships and Visiting Scientist Grants should be submitted to the FEMS Delegate for approval. The Delegate will then submit approved applications to FEMS. Deadline for receipt at FEMS Central Office: **1 December** and 15 June.

Applications for *Meeting Grants* should be approved by the FEMS society in the country where the meeting takes place. Deadline for receipt at FEMS Central Office: **1 March of the preceding year.**

Applications for *Young Scientists Meeting Grants* by young scientists wishing to attend selected FEMS Meetings should be submitted to the meeting organisers. The organisers will then forward the applications to FEMS. Detailed Regulations and Application Forms are available at the FEMS website: **www.fems-microbiology.org.**

> Events > Grants

UK Inquiry into Scientific Publications

In December 2003 the UK's House of Commons Science and Technology Committee opened an inquiry into scientific publications. The committee examined access, pricing and availability of scientific journals. In particular, the recent trend towards greater online accessibility of the scientific literature and its effect on the integrity of both journals and scientific research. More details can be found directly on the UK Parliament website or via the Biomed Central website (<http://www.biomedcentral.com/openaccess/inquiry/>). The committee received both written and

oral evidence, the latter taken from panels in sessions robustly chaired by Dr Ian Gibson MP, who encouraged panel members to give frank opinions. The panels represented publishers, learned societies, open access supporters, librarians, academics and funding bodies. Transcripts of the oral evidence are publicly available on the UK Parliament website.

Arguments for and against open access versus the status quo were heard in the sessions. Harold Varmus, from the Public Library of Science, unsurprisingly argued in favour of the author pays open access

model. In this model the author pays, say \$1500, to have an article published and then reading the final article is completely free. Others such as publishers and most of the academics argued that this funding model was untested and the real costs of publishing were between £2,000 and £30,000 per article. The librarians explained how they had great difficulty in negotiating "big-deals" with some publishers, in which a package of print and online journals is supplemented by extra material at little cost. The apparent flexibility of these schemes from the publishers' evidence did not seem to reconcile well with the difficulties reported by some librarians.

FEMS played a part in the inquiry, as I submitted written evidence and gave oral evidence in a panel of UK academics. I specifically mentioned the strong role that scientific societies play in supporting science by publishing research in their journals and organising meetings in which research is discussed before it is ready for publication. The final report of the inquiry has not yet been published but it has certainly generated a lot of discussion. For example, the journal *Nature* established an open online web debate on the topic. The topic has also been discussed at FEMS Publication Board and at the last meeting Mr Chris Gibson, an Elsevier Director, gave a presentation on the topic. I believe it will be a long time before this issue is resolved and in my view the future lies in diversity.

Dr John C. Fry
FEMS Publications Manager



Houses of Parliament in London.

Who to Contact? about publications, figures, references, manuscripts, etc.

Chief Editors of FEMS journals

FEMS Microbiology Ecology

Dr Ralf Conrad (MPI für Terrestrische Mikrobiologie, Marburg, Germany)
Email: fems.mpi@staff.uni-marburg.de

FEMS Immunology and Medical Microbiology

Dr Alex van Belkum (Medical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases, Erasmus MC, Rotterdam, The Netherlands)
Email: a.vanbelkum@erasmusmc.nl

FEMS Microbiology Letters

Dr Jeff Cole (School of Biosciences, The University of Birmingham, United Kingdom)
Email: fems-letters@bham.ac.uk

FEMS Microbiology Reviews

Dr Nigel Brown (School of Biosciences, The University of Birmingham, United Kingdom)
Email: fems-reviews@bham.ac.uk

FEMS Yeast Research

Ir Lex Scheffers (Kluyver Laboratory for Biotechnology, Delft University of Technology, Delft, The Netherlands)
Email: lex.scheffers@tnw.tudelft.nl

Manuscripts in progress

Queries related to submission: email to submission.letters@fems-microbiology.org for FEMS Microbiology Letters and submission@fems-microbiology.org for the other journals

For manuscripts under review: consult the Submitting Author Center at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/fems> (select the journal of your choice)

Status of accepted articles: consult the Author Gateway from Elsevier at <http://authors.elsevier.com>

Questions arising after acceptance of an article: email to authorsupport@elsevier.com

If you encounter problems with Manuscript Central, the online submission system FEMS uses, please contact:
support@scholarone.com

FEMS Microbiology Reviews invites suitably qualified senior microbiologists to join the Editorial Board from January 2005. Please send an outline c.v. showing recent publications and noting areas of research interest and previous editorial experience to the Chief Editor at fems-reviews@bham.ac.uk.

Coming Soon

www.fems-microbiology.org

FEMS

Immunology
and Medical
Microbiology

THEMATIC ISSUE

Infection, Inflammation and SIDS

Guest Editor: Caroline Blackwell

Studies on the role of infection and inflammation in SIDS have led to significant advances in the past five years, particularly in addressing the mechanisms underlying the risk factors for SIDS, such as exposure of infants to cigarette smoke and used cot mattresses. The articles in this issue of FEMS Immunology and Medical Microbiology update and provide new insights into the events triggering sudden deaths in infants.

Published by Elsevier B.V. on behalf of the Federation of European Microbiological Societies

Issue will be published online at
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/09288244>
 in August 2004 and print copies will be available at a special rate.
 Contact h.verhagen@elsevier.com for details

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What does the European Life Science Forum (ELSF) bring to FEMS?

The European academic associations dealing with the Life Sciences need to be more visible to the authorities of the European Union. It was this conviction that brought EMBO, the European Molecular Biology Organization, and FEBS, the Federation of European Biochemical Societies, together and induced them to start a new organisation, called ELSF, which should embrace a large number of similar societies. Today a dozen societies are members of ELSF, including FEMS. ELSF is directed by a council, in which all member societies are represented. The only employee of ELSF is Dr Luc van Dyck, whose office is for the time being located in Heidelberg in the premises of EMBO and EMBL (EMB Laboratory).

During the past two years ELSF has organized or co-organized several workshops dealing with societal and organisational aspects of the life sciences. One was "women in science". The published report on this workshop analyses the current situation and suggests ways of improving women's career possibilities through different practical measures, without resorting to a quota system. The report and related material can be found on the EMBO website (www.embo.org).

Another workshop dealing generally with "careers in the life sciences", led to a brochure, which appeared in print in October 2003 and can be accessed through www.elsf.org. The brochure shows how paths lead from undergraduate students to career scientists and professorships. It gives advice on what students, as well as their supervisors, can do to make their careers smoother and more continuous. It also describes steps that can be taken by institutions, funding organizations and governments to improve the present situation of scientists' careers. It indicates, for instance, how the recruitment of career scientists can be made more transparent, humane and effective.

During the past year ELSF has been heavily involved in the planning of a mega-project, namely the possible creation of a European Research Council (ERC). The reason for embarking on such an extensive project is that while in the view of most scientists the European Union, and in particular its Directorate of Research, fund a considerable number of projects, these are virtually all application-oriented. The aim of EU's 6th Framework Programme (FP6) is to solve problems, not to promote basic, curiosity-driven research. The ERC is seen as a new bottom-up granting tool, attributing funds exclusively on the basis of the high quality of submitted grant proposals. Several meetings of interested persons (including several Nobel prize winners) have taken place with a consensus emerging that all areas of the sciences as well as the humanities should be covered. Funding should be for excellent small and large projects, as well as for large, jointly used facilities. No obligation should exist to

have project partners from many countries (www.elsf.org).



The European Union is seen as the main source of money for the ERC. Fortunately the Commissioner for Research, Philippe

Busquin, is highly favourable to the project. If such a project could be realized and funded, the European research landscape would change enormously and contribute to making Europe the leading knowledge-based society, as was envisaged at the Barcelona Summit in 2002. More basic research in Microbiology, too, would be supported by the ERC, if and when it gets off the ground. FEMS would certainly welcome such additional European funding of research.

Reference:

Luc van Dyck, 2002: A new partnership between science and politics, EMBO Reports Volume 3, pages 1-3.

Dr Richard Braun
FEMS Meetings Secretary

ELSO mobilises Researchers' Support for a European Research Council

The European Life Scientist Organization, ELSO, is running an online petition "for a new and ambitious European science policy". The petition aims to gather grassroots support from European researchers in all disciplines for the creation of a new funding agency for basic research (the European Research Council), and to express to the European Parliament, Council and Commission scientists' frustrations with the bureaucracy of the

Framework Programmes.

To read more about the aims of the petition, please see The ELSO Gazette at <http://www.the-elso-gazette.org>.

To view or sign the petition, please go to <http://ultr23.vub.ac.be/petition/>.

Carol Featherstone, PhD
Editor-in-Chief
The ELSO Gazette

Transfer of FEMS Archives

A long-anticipated event took place with the transfer of the FEMS archives from the Registered Office in Reading to the Central Office in Delft. Early journal issues, files on meetings, fellows, and congress attendants that were supported by FEMS in the grey past, are now all assembled in an archive room in the basement of our new office. Prof. Eddie Dawes, FEMS Publications Manager from 1981 to 1990, spent considerable time and effort to weed out these archives. Ahead of us waits the arduous task to create an accessible archive as a record of a successful history.



Photo taken at the occasion of the transfer of the FEMS Archives. From left to right: Diman van Rossum (FEMS Executive Officer), Ron Fraser (SGM Executive Secretary), Maurice Lock (FEMS Treasurer) and Judith Rowlands (FEMS Accountant).

FEMS and ESCMID: to collaborate for European Microbiology

The first joint fellowship has been awarded in Prague

During the 14th European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) which was held in Prague last May, Jean-Claude Piffaretti, FEMS Delegate to ESCMID, signed on behalf of FEMS President Hans G. Trüper and together with Marc Streulens, ESCMID president, the "FEMS and ESCMID Memorandum for Collaboration". The document, which was approved by the ESCMID Executive on September 2003 and by FEMS Executive Committee on January 2004, establishes a scheme of collaboration between both organisations. In particular, the following decisions will be implemented:

- 1) Joint symposia will be organised at the FEMS congresses (every three years) and the ECCMID the year preceding a FEMS congress.
- 2) Joint fellowships will be presented by both parties.
- 3) The organisation of joint workshops on topics of common interest will be encouraged, with a format that might be similar to that of a Gordon conference.
- 4) Collaboration will be based on FEMS encompassing all fields of microbiology and ESCMID specialising in clinical microbiology and its related fields, including biomedical research on human pathogens, infectious diseases practice and chemotherapy, and control of communicable diseases.

This memorandum is only a first step in an avenue of tight collaboration foreseen between FEMS and ESCMID, meant as a sharing of strength with the aim to reinforce and develop microbiology in Europe.

Joint congress symposia and joint fellowships are the first collaborative actions that were put in place. Joint fellowships were awarded for the first time in the beginning of 2004: Roy Sleator

(Ireland), working on *Listeria monocytogenes*, was awarded the ESCMID-FEMS Fellowship at the 14th ECCMID congress, and Vladimir Gorbunov (Belarus), working on antimicrobial therapy, was awarded the FEMS-ESCMID Fellowship.

Dr Jean-Claude Piffaretti
FEMS Co-opted Executive Committee Member



Prof. Jean-Claude Piffaretti (left) and Prof. Marc Streulens signing the Memorandum of Collaboration between ESCMID and FEMS on May 2, 2004 in Prague.

(Advertisement)

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Bergey Medal for Distinguished Achievement in Bacterial Taxonomy

The Bergey Medal for Distinguished Achievement in Bacterial Taxonomy is awarded in recognition of long-term accomplishments, the sum total of which has had a substantial impact on the advancement of bacterial taxonomy. The medal was instituted in 1994, in part with a donation from R.G.E. Murray, and is sponsored by the Bergey's Manual Trust. The 2004 recipients of the medal are Monique Gillis (Laboratorium voor Microbiologie, Universiteit Gent, Belgium) and Hans Hippe (Deutsche Sammlung von Mikroorganismen und Zellkulturen GmbH, Braunschweig, Germany).



Fred A. Rainey
Secretary Bergey's Manual Trust

2004 Bergey Award

The Bergey Award was initiated in 1979 to honor an individual for outstanding contributions to prokaryotic taxonomy. The award, donated by the Board of Trustees of Bergey's manual Trust and Springer-Verlag, consists of a certificate, a \$2000 prize, and expenses for travel to receive the Award at a scientific meeting chosen by the recipient. The winner of the Bergey Award in 2004 is Rudolf Amann of the Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology in Bremen, Germany and the Award will be presented at ISME-10 in Cancun, Mexico in August 2004.

From 1980–1986 Amann studied Biology and Chemistry at the Technical University of Munich before entering the PhD program in the Department of Microbiology. He was awarded a PhD (summa cum laude) in 1998 for a thesis entitled "The beta-subunit of ATP-Synthase as a phylogenetic marker of Bacteria" which he carried out under the supervision of Professor Dr K.-H. Schleifer. For his postdoctoral studies Amann travelled to the US to the Departments of Veterinary Pathobiology and Microbiology of

the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. On his return to Germany in 1990 he took a position as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Microbiology at the Technische Universität München and developed further the fluorescence in situ hybridization (FISH) technique for the cultivation independent detection and identification of prokaryotes in diverse environments. During this time Dr Amann completed the Habilitation with a thesis on "In situ identification of single microbial cells with rRNA-targeted nucleic acid probes". Since 1997 Amann has been at the Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology in Bremen first as Head of the Independent Junior Scientist Group in Molecular Ecology and since 2001 as a Director of the MPI for Marine Microbiology and Head of the Department of Molecular Ecology. Dr Amann also holds a Full Professor position in Molecular Ecology at the University of Bremen.

Fred A. Rainey
Secretary Bergey's Manual Trust

MED-VET-NET

SfAM has been invited to be a partner in the EU Framework Six, MED-VET-NET, Network of Excellence; the only such Society to be involved in this exciting project. MED-VET-NET includes 8 veterinary and 7 public health institutes from 10 European countries. All partner institutes have national reference laboratory-based responsibilities for the prevention and control of zoonoses. The objective is to develop a network of excellence for the integration of veterinary, medical and food sciences in the field of safety, to improve research on the prevention and control of zoonoses while taking into account the public health of consumers and other stakeholders throughout the food chain. SfAM has the responsibility of heading up the 'Spreading Excellence' work package, an integration activity, spreading the knowledge within MED-VET-NET to scientists within the network and externally to the general public and the international scientific community. Thus continuing SfAM's aims of working with others to raise public understanding, appreciation and application of microbiology to everyday life.

From the Society for Applied Microbiology



In Memoriam: Professor Lajos Ferenczy

Professor Lajos Ferenczy, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Professor Emeritus of Szeged University, passed away on March 19, 2004 at age 74. Professor Ferenczy was an outstanding scientist and teacher of microbiology, recognised both nationally and internationally. He first achieved worldwide scientific fame when he worked out the protoplast fusion method for microscopic fungi and published his results in Nature in 1974. He organised the Department of Microbiology at the University of Szeged and performed research of high standards there for many years. His former students are now in leading positions at several Hungarian universities and research institutes.

He was awarded fourteen national, international and foreign prizes during his distinguished academic career. The most prestigious were the Purkyne Medal

(1981), the Hungarian State Prize (1985), the Manninger Medal (1989), the "Pro Sanitate" Medal (1993), the Albert Szent-Györgyi Prize (1994), the "For Szeged" Medal (1995), and the Educator's Commemorative Medal (2000). He was a member of several high-level scientific bodies such as the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Academia Europaea, EMBO, ICRO, EMBC, the American Academy of Microbiology, and the US National Academy of Sciences.

He is remembered and appreciated not only as a professor in Szeged but also as a patriot of that marvellous town. According to his last request, his burial service on April 16 was held in Szeged with his colleagues, former students and nearest relatives in attendance.

From the Hungarian Society for Microbiology

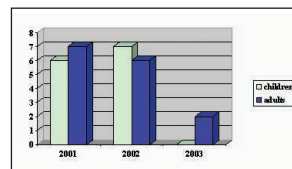
The MnC Vaccination Campaign in Iceland

Neisseria meningitidis is a Gram-negative diplococcus that causes a broad spectrum of human diseases, ranging from transient fever and bacteremia to fulminant meningococemia and meningitis with a mortality rate of about 10–15%. In Iceland the annual incidence has been among the highest in Europe, ~ 6–7/100.000 per year. Traditionally, serogroup B was the predominant serogroup, but between 1997 and 2002 the proportion of serogroup C increased steadily, reaching 80% of all cases in 2002.

In October 2002 the Icelandic health authorities launched an MnC vaccination campaign for all individuals from 6 months to 19 years of age. The vaccination was completed in five months and is now part of the vaccination program for children. Since the campaign started no child has been diagnosed with MnC and the incidence among adults has decreased

with more than 50%.

This vaccination has already been shown to be very cost-effective.



The number of detected cases of MnC 2001–2003.

(Læknaðlaðið 2004; 90:379–83.
<http://lb.icemed.is/web/2004/5?ArticleID=1586>).

Kristín Jónsdóttir
FEMS Delegate for the Microbiological Society of Iceland

and
Helga Erlendsdóttir
Member of the Microbiological Society of Iceland

Microbiology Awareness Campaign for the Scottish Parliament

March 2004
Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

The Scottish Microbiology Society (SMS) had a stand and poster presentation at the Microbiology Awareness Campaign for the Scottish Parliament, hosted by the Society for General Microbiology.

SMS presence was used to inform parliamentarians that we represent Scottish microbiologists involved in all aspects of: food, medical and veterinary, industrial, aquatic and environmental microbiology. It also showed that we hold symposia and act as a focus for the dissemination of knowledge in all of these areas.

In general, the meeting portrayed to the Scottish Parliament the important roles microbiologists play in the Scottish nations health and welfare and in the protection and understanding of the environment. Parliamentarians were also interested to hear the role microbiologists play in the creation of wealth through the activities of the burgeoning Scottish biotechnology industry.

Dr Graeme Walker
FEMS Delegate for SMS

Society for General Microbiology meets Scottish politicians

The SGM believes it is vital to promote microbiology and the importance of professional microbiologists to the government and civil servants. Currently it is targeting the UK's regional parliaments. The first event was held at Edinburgh on March 4, 2004 where over 100 microbiology experts met with Members of the Scottish Parliament to raise the profile of topics such as animal and human health, fish and marine

microbiology and bio-business, all of which are significant in Scotland. Informal discussions over lunch were followed by presentations introduced by Dr Elaine Murray, MSP. Short talks by SGM President Hugh Pennington, David Onions of Bioreliance Biotech Ltd and Brian Austin of Heriot-Watt University highlighted key issues and provoked an interesting debate. Tom McCabe, MSP, Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care, rounded off the proceedings.

He was delighted to endorse the campaign, and said, "While society at large may be unaware of the impact the microbiologist has on their quality of life, those of us who can attend events such as today's are afforded the opportunity to become much better informed." Twenty organizations exhibited at the event, showcasing the wide variety of microbiological activities that take place in Scotland.



Delegates listen to speakers at the SGM's Microbiology Awareness campaign Scotland Event.

Prokaryotes in Cortona

April 1-2, 2004
Cortona, Italy

The meeting of the Italian bacterial geneticists, with more than 100 participants, was held in the Tuscany Renaissance town of Cortona, under the sponsorship of the "Italian Genetic Society" (AGI) and the FEMS member society "Italian Society of General Microbiology and Microbial Biotechnology" (SIMGBM). For more than 15 years the "Cortona Procarioti" meeting yearly gathers researchers from all over Italy to

present and discuss their work. This year about 35 oral presentations were held, ranging from pure bacterial and phage genetics and molecular biology to applied microbial ecology and microbial biotechnology. According to tradition young students presented the papers to give them the opportunity to defend their work in public. Two well-known foreign scientists were also invited to give seminars: R. D'Ari and J.H. Alix, both from Paris, presented their recent results on chaperones and cell division, respectively. As an homage to genomics, G. Valle from



Participants taking a break in Cortona.

Padua presented the complete sequencing and annotation of *Photobacterium profundum*, the first genome entirely sequenced in Italy. The Cortona relaxing atmosphere, with no registration and fully open access, fostered friendship among people and the beginning of new scientific collaborations.

Dr Marco Bazzicalupo
(marcobazzi@dbag.unifi.it)
Organiser
Florence University

6th Meeting of the Société Française de Microbiologie

May 10-12, 2004
Bordeaux, France

About 750 people attended this meeting, coming mainly from France but also from French-speaking countries in Europe (Belgium, Switzerland) or abroad (Canada, Tunisia, Morocco, etc.).

Almost 300 papers were presented covering all the fields of microbiology. Plenary sessions were devoted to Bioterrorism, Cellular microbiology and Prions. The participation of Lone Gram (descendent of H.C.J. Gram) at a round table on History and Epistemology of Microbiology was very much appreciated. This meeting that reunited microbiologists from very different institutions (university, hospital, research groups) was very well organized. Participants have enjoyed, besides the scientific duties, the pleasure to taste food and wines from the very hospitable Aquitaine Region.

Dr Alain Le Faou
FEMS Delegate of the SFM

Ion Cantacuzino (1863–1934), Front-runner in Science, Law and Art



Ion Cantacuzino (1863–1934).

Ion Cantacuzino. Romanian physician and bacteriologist. Academician, university professor, founder and director of the Institute of Sera and Vaccines. Promoter of the modern Romanian school of microbiology and experimental medicine.

Ion I. Cantacuzino was born in Bucharest in 1863, according to the records of Kretzulescu church sometime between 13th and 25th of November. He was the son of Ion Cantacuzino, jurist and former minister, and Maria, the daughter of General Mavros. He inherited from his ancestors an active optimism and an encyclopedic mind.

At the age of 16, he went to Paris to complete his high school. Six years later he graduated from Sorbona University (letters and philosophy). Soon he was admitted at the Faculty of Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine in Paris. In 1891, he became a bachelor of natural sciences and met Ilia Mecinicoș who at that time worked at Pasteur Institute and whose work influenced him greatly. His doctoral dissertation in medicine (Paris, 1894) entitled "Recherches sur le mode de destruction du vibron cholérique dans l'organisme. Contribution à l'étude de l'immunité" pointed for the first time to the possibility of administering cholera vaccine by intestinal route. Between 1894–1897 he was a deputy professor at

the Chair of Animal Morphology, the Faculty of Sciences in Iași, Romania, where he continued his research in hematology. Wishing to carry out more important research, he went back to Paris, where he collaborated with Mecinicoș for five years. In 1901, he was designated a professor at the newly founded Chair of Experimental Medicine, Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest. Right away his aptitudes as a teacher, founder of school, active organizer and founder of institutions, became evident, which made him one of the world's most famous scientists.

Cantacuzino's activities were particularly varied. He was a professor who greatly influenced his disciples. His lectures were clear, well-documented and updated, with a logical succession of phenomena. He loved the youth and knew how to make young people love him. He used to say: *"Selfishness cannot be creative, young people flee from where there is no love"*. With these thoughts he managed to create a school.

He contributed greatly to the study of the pathogenicity and prophylaxis of tuberculosis. He carried out studies on the experimental infection and immunity in tuberculosis with defatted Koch bacilli and paratuberculosis bacilli. Between 1908–1911, he began the study of tuberculin together with A. Slatineanu and D. Danielopolu. Under Cantacuzino's guidance, Romania became the second country in the world that applied BCG vaccination on a large scale (starting 1926). At the Institute of Sera and Vaccines, founded in 1921, he set up a unit dedicated to the study of tuberculosis and the preparation of BCG vaccine. He strongly encouraged and supported the foundation of anti-tuberculosis sanatoriums, he founded and presided the "Society for the Study of Tuberculosis" and contributed to the organization of the first two national tuberculosis congresses.

His research was aimed also at the study of cholera. In 1913, during the Balkan war, he organized a campaign of cholera vaccination in an outbreak, which was a unique initiative in the world that largely contributed to a complete change of the concepts of immunology and epidemiology. This event is described in history as the "great Romanian experience in vaccination". In 1919, he published jointly with A. Marie an article entitled "Action activante de la muqueuse intestinale sur les propriétés pathogènes du vibron cholérique" where they revealed the capacity of some tissular substances to exacerbate the infectiousness of some germs. In 1933, he wrote an article "Diagnostic



microbiologique du vibron cholérique et choix d'un antigène pour la préparation d'un sérum agglutinant" in which he aimed at establishing the most suitable means for the identification of cholera vibrios and at preparing a standard agglutinating serum.

He paved the way towards experimental research in scarlet fever by providing data about the etiologic agent. He studied the epidemiological factors involved in the endemo-epidemic manifestation of the scarlet fever in Romania at that time.

Already in 1908–1910 he organized the first anti-malaria campaigns based on the systematic examination of blood and the preventive and curative administration of quinine. In 1924 the campaign was improved and extended by carrying out the pre- and post-epidemic investigations and the use of mobile laboratories. Under his guidance, studies on malaria were carried out in the Danube Delta.

During the typhoid fever epidemic in 1913, he laid the foundations of anti-typhoid preventive vaccination in Romania. One year later, this vaccination became compulsory in the army and was subsequently applied to the civil population in outbreaks.

Cantacuzino initiated also experimental research in leprosy (induced in white rats), pointing to the possibility of cultivating in vivo leprosy bacillum, which cannot be cultivated in vitro.

His studies included also typhoid fever during the epidemic reported in World War One (1916–1918) by taking efficient prevention and control measures. The epidemiological data collected by Professor Cantacuzino contributed to the clarification of several problems involved in the epidemiology of typhoid fever: duration of incubation, frequency of clinical bulbo-protuberant forms, the low virulence in children under 12 years, immunity, the value of the convalescent serum in the curative and preventive treatment. In 1917, he became the Head of the newly created Public Health Directorate for the civil population and the army. The creation of this institution contributed to a better collaboration of all civil and military authorities with foreign missions, which resulted in the prevention and control of various epidemics. For his activity, he was awarded in 1918 "The Commander of the Legion of Honor" and in 1919 the "Golden Medal of the French Gratitude".

Noteworthy, Cantacuzino reported, described and individualized a previously unknown morbid entity, namely epidemic catarrhal icterus.

Other fields where he was active are serum therapy and vaccination. He is the

author of numerous articles that established the optimal techniques for the immunization of animals used in the preparation of therapeutic sera. He organized the production of sera and vaccines: typhic-para-typhic vaccine (1900), anti-streptococcal serum (1904), anti-dysenteric serum (1906), cholera vaccine (1913), anti-diphtheria serum (1914), anti-meningococcal and anti-gangrenous serum (1920).

Cantacuzino elaborated the "Sanitary Law" (1910). This was a law of public opinion of the medical staff. It was based on preliminary discussions with the workers in the field, even with representatives of the medical students, as well as on scientific hygiene-sanitary studies carried out in the field. This law stipulated the measures aimed at the prevention and control of diseases, the setting up of contagious diseases hospitals, regional bacteriology laboratories, the extension of already existing hygiene laboratories (1908), the setting up of rural dispensaries. The law also stipulated that physicians were no longer under the control of the local administration and that continuous education was compulsory.

He founded the "Review of Medical Sciences" (1905), "les Annales Roumaines de Biologie" (1908, in collaboration with Professor I. Atanasiu) and "Archives roumaines de pathologie expérimentale et de microbiologie" (1928).

An important part of the activity of Professor Cantacuzino was the international collaboration in the fields of hygiene and public health. Owing to his scientific authority and acquired experience in the communicable diseases he was invited as an expert to several

conferences, the International Hygiene Office, the Hygiene Organization of the Nations' Society where he participated as a delegate of the Romanian Government or as a member of the Hygiene Committee (1922–1934). In this capacity, he collaborated in all the special commissions; he was assigned the study of the epidemiological role of non-agglutinable cholera vibrios, the epidemiology of poliomyelitis, the serum therapy of meningococcal meningitis, etc. He was an active member in the malaria commissions of the international organizations, raising the problem of malaria in river delta regions. He participated in the commissions for the standardization of sera and other biological products, initiating research coordinated by various institutes. He was a corresponding member and an associate member of "Société de Pathologie Exotique" (1909), "Société de Biologie de Paris" (1913), "Académie de Médecine de Paris" and honorary member of the Academy of Medicine of Belgium" (1921), "Académie des Sciences" (1931), "doctor honoris causa", Lyon (1930), the Faculty of Medicine in Athens (1931), Bordeaux (1934), a member of the Romanian Academy (1925).

Finally, Cantacuzino was also involved in social, political and cultural activities. Besides the sanitary law, he also elaborated the lottery law for the creation of a social assistance fund and the law for the regularization of the work in harbors. He actively promoted access to culture and education for the working class (1896–1905) as well as the national claims and rights, participating as Romania's delegate in the Trianon peace talks (1914–1920). He militated the stimulation of the Romanian-French cultural relationships, contributing to the foundation of the

French House in Bucharest (1922), the French Institute (1923), and the Friends of France Society (1932).

In art, Cantacuzino either supported or organized the retrospective engraving exhibition of Grafica Romana Society (1916), the exhibition entitled "The Portrait in the French Engraving" (1923), where the masterpieces of the XVIth-XIXth centuries could be admired, the Romanian exhibition at Jeu de Paume, the permanent exhibition at Toma Stelian Museum.

Ion I. Cantacuzino died on January 14th, 1934. Scientific accuracy, capacity for both analysis and synthesis, universality, complexity, and philosophical unity are just some of the attributes that characterized his personality.

Marian Negut and Adrian Bancescu
National Institute for Research and Development for Microbiology and Immunology "Cantacuzino"



National Institute for Research and Development for Microbiology and Immunology "Cantacuzino".

CENTRAL OFFICE

"Holding up our own trousers"

As a first step in "holding up our own trousers", a Dutch expression for becoming mature and independent, FEMS is now leasing its office space from GeoDelft, a foundation located on campus but not part of the Delft University of Technology.

The second phase in the development of Central Office is for FEMS to become an independent employer and to optimise its office and personnel management. FEMS currently employs nine people, at a total of seven full-time equivalents. FEMS is busily engaged in the process of establishing itself as a foundation in the Netherlands, as the appropriate legal entity for the employment of its staff. This development is most carefully planned due to the legal and fiscal intricacies, arising from operating in two

European countries, the UK and the Netherlands.

The workload on Central Office staff has been fairly high during the past half year, due to a number of factors such as an increased need for support for the online manuscript submissions/review system for the five FEMS journals, a maternity leave, efforts to conclude the 1st FEMS Congress and to kick-off the 2nd Congress, increased secretarial services for Member Societies, and more. The following new members of staff were introduced to their tasks in the office: Iliana Yocheva (Bulgaria) started as Grants Administrator, Montserrat Blázquez-Domingo (Spain) as Editorial Administrator, and Bong-Yeo Venema (Korea/Netherlands) as Office Assistant. Regrettably, Marijke Klaver the current

Office Assistant is returning to her roots in Cape Town, South Africa, after serving FEMS for the past year. All staff contributed in an excellent way to the wide variety of tasks that require effective and efficient handling.



Dr Diman van Rossum
Executive Officer

CENTRAL OFFICE

FEMS Central Office

Keverling Buismanweg 4
2628 CL Delft
The Netherlands
T: +31-15-269 3920
F: +31-15-269 3921
E: fems@fems-microbiology.org

FEMS Registered Office

Marlborough House
Basingstoke Road
Spencers Wood
Reading RG7 1AG
United Kingdom
T: +44-118-988 1823
F: +44-118-988 5656
E: office@fems.org.uk

FEMS is devoted to the promotion of microbiology in the European area.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



FEMS President Dr Hans G. Trüper

Institut für Mikrobiologie & Biotechnologie, Universität Bonn
Meckenheimer Allee 168, Bonn, D-53115, Germany
T: +49-228-732 320
F: +49-228-737 576
E: trueper@uni-bonn.de



FEMS Vice President Dr Eliora Z. Ron

Faculty of Life Sciences, Tel-Aviv University
PO Box 39040, Tel-Aviv, 69978, Israel
T: +972-3-640 9379
F: +972-3-641 4138
E: eliora@post.tau.ac.il



FEMS Secretary General Dr Peter Raspor

Dept of Food Science and Technology, Biotechnical Faculty,
University of Ljubljana
Jamnikarjeva 101, Ljubljana, SI-1000, Slovenia
T: +386-1-423 1161
F: +386-1-257 4092
E: peter.raspor@bf.uni-lj.si



FEMS Treasurer Dr Maurice A. Lock

School of Biological Sciences, University of Wales,
Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2UW, United Kingdom
T: +44-1248-382 310
F: +44-1248-370 731
E: m.a.lock@bangor.ac.uk



FEMS Publications Manager Dr John C. Fry

Cardiff School of Biosciences, Main Building, Cardiff University
(Museum Avenue) P.O. Box 915, Cardiff, Wales, CF10 3TL,
United Kingdom
T: +44-29-2087 4190
F: +44-29-2087 4305
E: fry@cardiff.ac.uk



FEMS Meetings Secretary Dr Richard Braun

BioLink
(Schulweg 14) Postfach 208, Bern 11, 3000, Switzerland
T: +41-31-832 0000
F: +41-31-832 0000
E: rdbraun@bluewin.ch



FEMS Member at Large Dr Godfried D. Vogels

Dept of Microbiology & Evolutionary Biology, Faculty of Science,
Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen
Toernooiveld 1, Nijmegen, 6525 ED, Netherlands
T: +31-24-365 3390
F: +31-24-365 2830
E: fvogels@sci.kun.nl



FEMS Co-opted Executive Committee member Dr Jean-Claude Piffaretti

Istituto Cantonale di Microbiologia
Via Mirasole 22A, Bellinzona, 6501, Switzerland
T: +41-91-814 6031
F: +41-91-814 6029
E: jean-claude.piffaretti@ti.ch

**Dr Milton da Costa has been elected
Vice President for the term 2004-2007**

COLOFON

Chief Editor: Prof. Peter Raspor; Managing Editor: Wilma van Wezenbeek
Editorial input: Dr Alenka Prinčič; Editorial assistance: Marijke Klaver

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DELEGATES OF MEMBER SOCIETIES

FULL MEMBERS (NATIONAL)

Austria Österreichische Gesellschaft
für Hygiene, Mikrobiologie und
Präventivmedizin
Dr Gerold Stanek
gerold.stanek@univie.ac.at

Belgium Belgische Vereniging voor
Microbiologie / Société Belge de
Microbiologie
Dr Jozef Anné
jozef.anne@rega.kuleuven.ac.be

Bulgaria Bulgarian Society for
Microbiology (Union of Scientists in
Bulgaria)
Dr Angel S. Galabov
galabov@microbio.bas.bg

Croatia Hrvatsko Mikrobiološko
Društvo
Dr Danko Hajsig
danko.hajsig@pliva.hr

Denmark Danmarks Mikrobiologiske
Selskab
Dr Gregers J. Gram
gjjg@ssi.dk

Estonia Eesti Mikrobioloogide
Ühendus
Dr Tiina Alamäe
talamae@ebc.ee

Finland Societas Biochemica,
Biophysica et Microbiologica Fenniae
Dr Benita Westerlund-Wikström
benita.westerlund@helsinki.fi

France Société Française de
Microbiologie
Dr Alain Le Faou
a.lefaou@chu-nancy.fr

Germany Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Hygiene und Mikrobiologie
Dr Karl-Heinz Schleifer
schleife@mikro.biologie.tu-
muenchen.de

Germany Vereinigung für Allgemeine
und Angewandte Mikrobiologie
Dr Bernhard Schink
bernhard.schink@uni-konstanz.de

Greece Hellenic Society of
Microbiology
Dr Anastasia Pangaly
micro@paidon-agiasofia.gr

Hungary Magyar Mikrobiológiai
Társaság
Dr Janos Minarovits
minimicrobi@hotmail.com

Iceland Örfurfræðifélag Íslands
Dr Kristín Jónsdóttir
krijons@landspitali.is

Ireland Irish Society of Clinical
Microbiologists
Dr Olive Murphy
omurphy@cork.bonsecours.ie

Israel Israel Society for Microbiology
Dr Shlomo Rottem
rottem@cc.huji.ac.il

Italy Associazione Microbiologi Clinici
Italiani
Dr Daniela Marchetti
daniela.marchetti@ausl.bologna.it

Italy Società Italiana di Microbiologia
Dr Gianfranco Donelli
donelli@iss.it

Italy Società Italiana di Microbiologia
General e Biotecnologie Microbiche
Dr Giancarlo Lancini
glancini@vicuron.it

Latvia Latvijas Mikrobiologu Biedrība
Dr Alexander Rapoport
rapoport@mail.eunet.lv

Lithuania Lithuanian Society of
Medical Microbiology
Dr Alvydas Pavilionis

Macedonia Združenje na
Mikrobiolozi na Makedonija
Dr Elena T. Dokic
elenatd@hotmail.com

Netherlands Nederlandse Vereniging
voor Microbiologie
Dr Bauke Oudega
oudega@bio.vu.nl

Norway Norsk Forening for
Mikrobiologi
Dr Gudmund Holstad
gudmund.holstad@veths.no

Poland Polskie Towarzystwo
Mikrobiologów
Dr Stefan Tyski
tyski@il.waw.pl

Portugal Sociedade Portuguesa de
Microbiologia
Dr Milton S. da Costa
milton@ci.uc.pt

Romania Societatea Romana de
Microbiologie
Dr Marian Negut
mnegut@cantacuzino.ro

Russia Rossiiskoe
Mikrobiologicheskoe Obshchestvo
Dr Vladimir V. Ignatov
ignatov@ibppm.sgu.ru

Slovenia Slovensko Mikrobiološko
Društvo
Dr Tatjana Avšič-Zupanc
tatjana.avsic@mf.uni-lj.si

Spain Sociedad Española de
Microbiología
Dr Carlos Hardisson-Rumeu
chr@fq.uniovi.es

Sweden Svenska Föreningen för
Mikrobiologi
Dr Per-Eric Lindgren
perli@imk.liu.se

Switzerland Société de Suisse de
Microbiologie / Schweizerische
Mikrobiologie Gesellschaft
Dr Dieter Haas
dieter.haas@imf.unil.ch

Turkey Türk Mikrobiyoloji Cemiyeti
Dr Özdem Ang
ozdem.ang@superonline.com

United Kingdom Association of
Medical Microbiologists
Dr Roland J. Koerner
roland.koerner@chs.northy.nhs.uk

United Kingdom British Mycological
Society
Dr Paul S. Dyer
paul.dyer@nottingham.ac.uk

United Kingdom Society for Applied
Microbiology
Dr Peter Silley
p-s@mbconsult.co.uk

United Kingdom Society for General
Microbiology
Dr John E. Beringer
j.beringer@bristol.ac.uk

United Kingdom Scottish Microbiology
Society
Dr Graeme M. Walker
g.walker@abertay.ac.uk

FULL MEMBERS (Multi National)

Czech Republic & Slovakia
Československá Společnost
Mikrobiologická
Dr Jaroslav Spizek
spizek@biomed.cas.cz

Serbia & Montenegro Društvo
Mikrobiologa Jugoslavije
Dr Dragojlo Obradovic
dobrad@eunet.yu

Global International Biodeterioration
and Biodegradation Society
Dr Fernando Laborda
fernando.laborda@uah.es

PROVISIONAL MEMBERS

Belarus Belarusian Scientific Medical
Society of Microbiologists,
Epidemiologists and Parasitologists
Dr Leonid P. Titov
titov@briem.ac.by

Russia Interregional Association for
Clinical Microbiology and
Antimicrobial Chemotherapy
Dr Leonid S. Strachounski
iacmac@microbiology.ru

Ukraine Society of Microbiologists of
Ukraine
Dr Bohdan P. Matselyukh
bohdan@serv.imv.kiev.ua

German-speaking countries
Gesellschaft für Virologie
Dr Otto Haller
virology@ukl.uni-freiburg.de

Europe European Society for Clinical
Virology
Dr Jurjen Schirm
lab@jurjenschirm.dds.nl

Global Society for Anaerobic
Microbiology
Dr Jon S. Brazier
brazier@cardiff.ac.uk

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