



FEBS News

ISSUE 1 (FEBRUARY) 2012



Sevilla 2012: 22nd IUBMB and 37th FEBS Congress
From Single Molecules to Systems Biology

FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN BIOCHEMICAL SOCIETIES

www.febs.org

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**A MESSAGE FROM FEBS TO ALL MEMBERS
OF ITS CONSTITUENT SOCIETIES****WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO PUBLISH YOUR
PAPERS IN OUR JOURNALS**

FEBS has twin commitments to high-quality publications and the promotion of molecular biosciences. FEBS owns all its publications, from *FEBS Journal* to *FEBS Letters*, *Molecular Oncology* and *FEBS Open Bio*. They are published on our behalf by Wiley-Blackwell and Elsevier, who return most of the revenue to FEBS, which, as a not-for-profit academic organization, ploughs all the income into funding our diverse activities: FEBS fellowships; advanced courses and workshops; congresses; and aiding researchers in poorer countries. By publishing in FEBS journals and taking part in reviewing, you are both supporting high-quality science and helping provide an essential income stream to fund education and research. The proliferation of open access journals with ill-defined standards of peer review makes it more important than ever to publish in journals that bear the stamp of respected organizations and publishers.



Cover: Sevilla, Spain, is the host city for the joint 22nd IUBMB and 37th FEBS Congress, from 4th to 9th September 2012. Pages 22–25 of this issue highlight plans for the scientific program, summarise useful information on registration and introduce this interesting city. Have you booked your place yet?

About FEBS News:

FEBS News is published three or four times a year. Email alerts containing a link to *FEBS News* are sent to approximately 16,000 subscribers in more than 50 countries whenever a new issue is out. This issue as well as all former issues of *FEBS News* are available online at <http://www.febs.org>

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As a service to our more than 40,000 members, FEBS offers **FREE** advertising of academic positions (PhD students, PostDocs and Senior PostDocs) and scientific events in this newsletter and on our website.

Questions and suggestions about *FEBS News* should be sent to the *FEBS News* Editor, Carolyn Ellis (elliss@febs.org).



Dear Colleagues,

Molecular life sciences in Europe and worldwide are developing at an ever-faster rate. While this growth means more knowledge and even deeper understanding, it also causes further diversification of biochemistry, the core discipline of FEBS. Biochemistry is now pursued in each and every element of the life sciences – from investigations of developmental processes to studies of immune responses. The increasingly complex questions driven by human curiosity and expected to be resolved by molecular analysis all use biochemical concepts and tools, and the answers obtained are also biochemical in nature. The broadening application of biochemistry across the molecular life sciences is a clear shift that is already affecting the nature of the biochemical communities constituting FEBS and all our activities, and has important implications for the future directions of FEBS.

As an illustration of this, a quick scan of the courses FEBS is supporting in 2012 reveals topics spanning from noncoding RNA in transcription to host–pathogen interactions to high-performance proteomics (pages 10–11). Furthermore, joint courses with other organizations, such as with EMBO, are already routine and, more recently, we have also had a joint course with the European Federation of Immunological Societies (EFIS). Nevertheless, there is scope for further expansion and diversification here. The widening applications of biochemistry are also clear from the range of research questions being addressed by FEBS Long-Term postdoctoral Fellows: vertebrate organogenesis, tissue homeostasis, stem cell epigenetics and autophagy are random samples illustrating what biochemistry includes today. Altogether, the fundamental role of biochemistry across the life sciences is not always recognized and reminds one of Monsieur Jourdain in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who discovers that he has in fact spoken prose all his life.

This ever-increasing scope of biochemistry has prime implications for the journals of FEBS. Over many years, *FEBS Journal* and *FEBS Letters* have become key forums for papers within the field of biochemistry, and as the field has broadened the range of topics covered by its papers has expanded. Some four years ago an interesting initiative was undertaken by FEBS in the founding of a new journal – *Molecular Oncology* – as a forum for publication of research on molecular aspects of cancer, from the lab bench all the way to the clinic. Very recently, FEBS has launched an open access journal: *FEBS OpenBio* (page 31). This important and timely endeavour came in response to the widespread demand for such a publication medium, naturally driven also by the electronic communication developments. Significantly, this new forum has the wide scope of publishing papers on all aspects of molecular and cellular life sciences, reflecting the wide diversification of our field. These publishing initiatives should allow FEBS to continue to fulfil its role as the largest European organization supporting biochemistry in all its diversity – both through aiding dissemination of research findings and as investments to provide future financial support for all FEBS' other activities, such as its extensive Fellowships and Advanced Courses programmes.

Last but not least, the leadership of FEBS has undergone considerable changes over the past couple of years, as further elaborated in this issue (pages 4–8). FEBS is governed by an Executive Committee comprising the Secretary General, the Treasurer and the Chairs of its various other Committees and Working Groups. These are elected by the FEBS Council, constituted of delegates from the national biochemical societies that make up our Federation. All these individuals give freely of their time and energy to further FEBS goals. After more than a quarter of a century as the FEBS Treasurer, Dr John (Iain) Mowbray, has just ended his term. Sir Alan Fersht, FRS FMedSci, from Cambridge, UK, has taken over this demanding responsibility as of January 1st 2012. Also starting new roles in the Executive Committee from 2012 are Prof. László Fésüs from Debrecen, Hungary, as the FEBS Publications Committee Chairman; Prof. Winnie Eskild from Oslo, Norway, as Chairperson; and Prof. Sergio Papa from Bari, Italy, as Vice-Chairman. In addition, about a year ago, Prof. Vicente Rubio from Valencia, Spain, joined the Executive Committee as the FEBS Fellowships Committee Chairman; Prof. Jaak Järvi

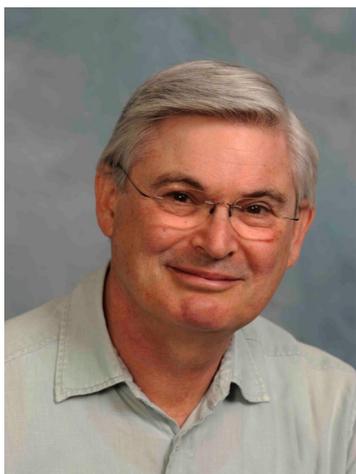
from Tartu, Estonia, joined as the FEBS Advanced Courses Committee Chairman; and Prof. J.-H. Weil from Strasbourg, France, was elected as Chairman of the FEBS Science and Society Committee. All longer-serving members of the Executive Committee are actively developing new programmes and directions in the service of our community – from education initiatives (pages

15–17) to involvement in European science policy (pages 18–20). Allow me to end by thanking them all – both past and present members of the Executive Committee – for their devoted work, and by wishing all of us a productive new year.

Israel Pecht
FEBS Secretary General

New FEBS Executive Committee members

The FEBS Executive Committee welcomes two new members into roles starting from 1st January 2012: Sir Alan Fersht, as the new FEBS Treasurer (elected during the FEBS Council meeting in Gothenburg in 2010); and Professor László Fésüs, as the Publications Committee Chairman (elected at the FEBS Council meeting in Torino in 2011).



Sir Alan Fersht, FRS FMedSci
FEBS Treasurer

Alan Fersht is a group leader at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge, UK, having previously been Herchel Smith Professor of Organic Chemistry and Director of the MRC Centre for Protein Engineering, Cambridge.

Best known for being a pioneer of protein engineering, his current research interests are protein folding, misfolding and cancer. His major projects are: using structural, biophysical and cell-based methods to study how mutation affects proteins in the cell cycle, particularly the tumour suppressor p53, in order to design novel anti-cancer drugs that function by restoring the activity of mutated proteins; and structural studies on p53 and its complexes.

Alan Fersht is a Fellow of the Royal Society, Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences (USA), Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Member of EMBO, Member of the Academy of Medical Sciences, and Member of Academia Europaea. He has won numerous international awards, including: FEBS Anniversary Prize (1980) and Datta Lecture and Medal (1993); The Royal Society Gabor (1991), Davy (1998) and Royal (2008) Medals; Novo Biotechnology Award (1986); Royal Society of Chemistry Charmian (1986) and Natural Products (1999) Medals; The Biochemical Society Jubilee Lecture and Harden Medal (1993); Feldberg Foundation Prize (1996); Protein Society Anfinsen (1999) and Stein and Moore (2001) awards; American Chemical Society Bader Award (2005); Linderstrøm-Lang Prize and Medal (2005); Bijvoet Medal (2008); G N Lewis Medal (2008); and Wilhelm Exner Medal (2009). He was knighted in 2003 for his work on protein science, and has honorary degrees from Uppsala, Brussels, Weizmann Institute, Imperial College and The Hebrew University. He is Associate Editor of *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, responsible for biochemistry and biophysics, and Senior Editor of *Protein Engineering, Design and Selection (PEDS)*.

Aims at FEBS

“The immediate goals have been to transfer operations of the FEBS Treasury from London to a new office in Cambridge, and to update banking and administrative procedures. In the longer term, the challenge will be to maintain FEBS’ income streams from its journals during a time of upheaval in scientific publishing and to manage FEBS’ investments through the Eurozone crisis. The ultimate aim is to ensure FEBS can continue its work to support scientists through its wide range of Fellowships, courses, travel grants, prizes and other initiatives.”



Professor László Fésüs
FEBS Publications Committee Chairman

László Fésüs is Chairman of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Debrecen, Hungary. He began a career in biomedical research in the 1970s following qualification as an MD, and received his PhD in Immunology in 1978. He spent 3 years as a postdoc at the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), and then returned to Hungary to work at the University of Debrecen. He became Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in 1988, has been Chairman of this department since 1993, and has also held the posts of Rector (1999–2001, 2007–2010) and President of the Medical and Health Science Center (2001–2007) of the university.

As one of his major research interests, he has made significant contributions to the structural and functional characterization of the enigmatic multifunctional enzyme transglutaminase 2, developed novel assays and probes to detect its activity, linked its function to cellular differentiation, apoptosis and clearance of apoptotic cells, described

several novel transglutaminase substrates and revealed the molecular details of its action in several pathological processes including neurodegeneration, inflammation and autoimmune diseases. Currently his research group focuses on molecular mechanisms in cell death, inflammation and stem cell differentiation.

László Fésüs has been a visiting professor at the University of Texas and the University of Rome, and has coordinated major European projects of COST, ESF and the European Union's Framework Programme 7. He was elected to chair the Hungarian Accreditation Committee for higher education (2004–2007), and the Hungarian Biochemical Society (2006–), and became a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1998. He has received two prestigious prizes of Hungary: the Széchenyi Prize (2005) and the Dénes Gábor Prize (2007).

Aims at FEBS

“It is an honour and significant responsibility to chair the Publications Committee of FEBS. One of our major tasks and challenges is to help make the journals of FEBS more widely used for publication of cutting-edge research findings in the molecular life sciences. To achieve this, we have to bring our journals closer to the scientific community, particularly to members of the FEBS Constituent Societies and the fast-growing laboratories in China, India and South America. The new open access journal *FEBS Open Bio* has been launched recently to provide even more opportunity for our colleagues to publish their novel findings in an easily accessible way with us. Our excellent Editorial Boards and the partner publishers Elsevier and Wiley-Blackwell work very efficiently together and the Committee to serve progress and communication in science and society.”

FEBS Executive Committee 2012

Prof. Israel Pecht
Rehovot, Israel
FEBS Secretary General

Prof. Vicente Rubio
Valencia, Spain
Chair, Fellowships Committee

Prof. Jacques-Henry Weil
Strasbourg, France
Chair, Science and Society Committee

Sir Alan Fersht
Cambridge, UK
FEBS Treasurer

Prof. Jaak Järvi
Tartu, Estonia
Chair, Advanced Courses Committee

Prof. Adam Szewczyk
Warsaw, Poland
Congress Counsellor

Prof. Winnie Eskild
Oslo, Norway
Chair

Prof. László Fésüs
Debrecen, Hungary
Chair, Publications Committee

Prof. Claudina Rodrigues-Pousada
Oeiras, Portugal
Chair, Working Group on the Career of Young Scientists

Prof. Sergio Papa
Bari, Italy
Vice-Chair

Prof. Gül Güner-Akdoğan
Izmir, Turkey
Chair, Education Committee

Prof. Lea Sistonen
Turku, Finland
Chair, Working Group on Women in Science

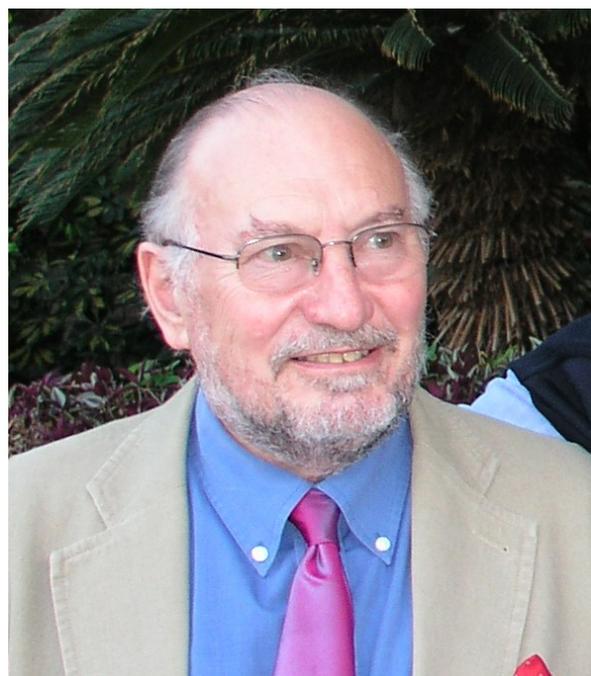
Farewell to Dr Iain Mowbray

At the end of 2011, Dr John (Iain) Mowbray stepped down as the FEBS Treasurer after an extraordinarily long stint of 25 years. This has been an unpaid, demanding position, with its remit stretching from negotiations and discussions with FEBS' publishing, banking and accounting partners to work with the various committees of FEBS to manage ongoing expenditure in FEBS initiatives across Europe and beyond. Through this central role, Iain has contributed enormously to the achievements and direction of FEBS since the 1980s. At the most recent FEBS Executive Committee meeting in London (November 2011), Iain was formally thanked for his outstanding long-term service to FEBS, and presented with a silver chalice inscribed with a phrase that summed up his commitment: "Total dedication to FEBS". He also received a Folio edition of the life of Fryderyk Chopin from the Polish Biochemical Society, which has conferred on him the accolade of Honorary Membership of the Society.

From his long association with FEBS, Iain is in a unique position to provide *FEBS News* readers with some historical perspective on the work of FEBS. In this farewell interview, he reflects on his role as Treasurer and how FEBS has developed over the years.

The path from biochemistry researcher to FEBS Treasurer is not an obvious one. What is your research background and how did you end up working for FEBS?

There are a number of coincidental strands to this. My research career was always within a university environment and I have always also been active in organizing complementary events – whether these were beer and skittles matches or visiting speakers and departmental seminars. When I returned to Europe in 1972 from a post-doc period in Melvin Calvin's Department of Chemical Biodynamics in Berkeley, California, it was to a lectureship at University College London (UCL). The Biochemical Society had been founded there in 1911, and UCL was still very active in the Society affairs. Its main three-day Annual Society Meeting was held there and I soon inherited the role of local organizer. In addition, I founded and ran the Society's Regulation in Metabolism Group as Group Secretary and Chairman from 1978–1984, and represented all the Groups on the main Society Committee for much of this time.



The second strand is that during this time I was fortunate to develop a strong friendship with the founding Treasurer of FEBS, Prakash Datta, whose office was adjacent to mine and my research labs. Partly as a consequence, I took my research students and post-docs to the annual FEBS Meeting (now Congress) and, through Prakash, became familiar with FEBS activities. Prakash retired in 1985 but continued to come to UCL daily, researching what was to become *The Oxford Dictionary of Biochemistry*. However, in 1986 a sudden worry about his health led him to consider what would happen to FEBS if he became seriously unwell, since all FEBS treasury activities were solely in his hands. Thus he asked me to his study at home where all the FEBS files were so that I would be able to access these if necessary. Another consideration may have been that much of the data were on his BBC 'B' computer and I was probably one of only two active computer-literate members of the Department!

My research on the mechanism of ATP conservation in myocardial ischaemia was going well and I had just been promoted to a Readership. Prakash Datta's wife, Naomi, a very distinguished microbiologist, warned me that the commitment required for FEBS might be too great, but I ignored her sensible advice and crossed the Rubicon. The FEBS Executive Committee and then Council appointed me as Assistant Treasurer and gave me access to the bank accounts. I continued to take over part of the Treasurer's duties and at the Rome Council in 1989 I was appointed Treasurer-elect when Prakash announced his intention of resigning.



A key role of the FEBS Treasurer has been to balance income from FEBS publications with ongoing and new programmes and initiatives of FEBS as a charity. What have been your guiding principles and aims?

It is quite clear – and we can see examples – that Societies starved of funds are likely to be relatively ineffectual in meeting their aims. Thus my objective as Treasurer has been to husband FEBS' resources to provide a significant wealth base.

The first priority was to keep the journals viable not only as conduits of research findings but also as businesses by (most importantly) forging good trusting relationships with our professional publishing partners – and further to make sure that FEBS received its fair share of the income generated from the quality assurance provided by our distinguished Editorial Boards. The next was to keep a firm control on expenditure, looking for value for money in everything and keeping spending committees clearly informed about the resources available to them. The statutes set this as a discretionary responsibility of the Treasurer.

In the initial years my aim was to underspend each year so that a reserve could accumulate to provide stability should our income, somewhat over-dependent on publishing, suffer a downturn. More recently, having a reserve of over four times annual expenditure, I have been keen to encourage diversification into new support schemes consonant with our aims so that the reserves will not continue to accumulate. Hence, even with a complete loss of publishing income, FEBS would still be able to fulfil its current commitments.

Would the founders of FEBS recognize the FEBS of today?

In the sense of its concentration on younger scientists, support for an annual wide-ranging Congress and its requirement for mobility between countries in the European area, yes. By contrast, the ability to fund diverse programmes without having to trawl around to find individual sponsorship for 'Summer Courses' and research exchange visits would have been a source of relief compared to the efforts they had had to go to. Their foresight in rebranding *Biochemische Zeitschrift* with the support of the German Society and Springer Verlag as the *European Journal of Biochemistry*, and the drive by Prakash Datta and Bill Whelan to establish *FEBS Letters* with the support of Hans Krebs, was crucial. Central to all this was Prakash's insistence that FEBS should hold the copyright of these journals.

Without that, I would have been unable to achieve the favourable financial terms we now have with the publishers for these publications.

Of all its initiatives, the FEBS Fellowship programme receives the most funding from FEBS. How has this programme developed over the years?

The Fellowships programme was established at a time when one could find support for research visits within a country but not for mobility across state borders. Thus, the imperative of FEBS' transnational rules produced one of the very first European research mobility programmes. The Short-Term (up to 3 months) programme developed into a Long-Term (1 year) one as FEBS funds grew, and the Summer Fellowships for pre-PhD students were a further extension to younger members. Finally, the consideration of how to help economically deprived Eastern European scientists without actively promoting the 'brain-drain' led to the Collaborative Scholarship scheme, which allowed research students from these states to visit Western laboratories to conduct experiments impossible in their home laboratory but required a return home to complete a thesis. More recently, the increased funds available have allowed FEBS to offer the 3-year Fellowships for very able researchers – a length of time often now needed to complete a significant advance in a field of research.

Other important areas of FEBS funding over the past 25 years have been the annual FEBS Congress and the Advanced Courses. Are you surprised these have remained important fixtures in scientists' calendars?

We debated often in past years about the need for a 'general' Congress rather than meetings on focused research topics. Our conclusion was that for young scientists at the beginning of their research careers, and who are not committed to a particular field, there was still a strong need to provide research at the cutting edge but available to a wide spectrum of audience. Indeed, the case is even stronger now that research teams often comprise scientists trained initially in a variety of disciplines from physics and mathematics through chemistry and biochemistry to cell biology and genetics. There are now many research-area-specific meetings and only Congresses such as the annual FEBS one offer a view of the horizon across the biosciences.



As for the Advanced Courses programme, which includes focused Workshops and Special Meetings as well as theoretical and practical teaching both *in silico* and in the laboratory, the rate of development and evolution of techniques has never been so fast and the need for these (re-)training events remains very strong.

There have been huge changes in national boundaries, politics and monetary matters in the FEBS area since the 1980s, and these continue. Tell us about some of the impacts on the work of FEBS during your time as Treasurer.

FEBS has always tried to build positive bridges with state officials and not to take a political stance since that would seldom be to the benefit of members in regimes that were less democratic than the optimum. There were two problems. Sending funds to support events in some regimes meant that any surplus could not be recovered – although often that could be ceded to the local biochemical society. Equally, exchange rate fluctuations meant that endless last-minute adjustments were needed. In the Soviet Bloc, most bills had to be paid in cash – local or exchangeable! The best exchange rates for local currency were usually available from the chief porter in your hotel and transactions took place in the lift between floors! Prakash and I were lucky in being relatively well-built so that the body belts round our waists containing Deutsche Marks, US Dollars and Roubles were not too obvious.

Even in Western European countries there were problems because of foreign exchange rules and limits on the amount one could draw at any time from a bank on a single cheque. Because of the small maximum limit in Italy in 1989, Prakash and I

spent hours taking turns to queue up at the Congress bank counter to redeem cheques!

As Treasurer, you've been involved in all aspects of FEBS. Looking back over the past 25 years, are there specific programmes or events that you are particularly proud of?

I think pride is the wrong term. FEBS is a team effort. I am very fortunate to have had a hand in building up FEBS resources and thus increasing the potential our scientists have to influence research in the European area. This was only achieved by the many talented European colleagues with whom I was privileged to be able to collaborate in trying to improve, promote and make available our scientific advances for everyone – and to use the income from these efforts for the educational benefit of the coming generation of scientists.

Has it been all work and no play?

Certainly not! I have made the most wonderful set of friends in every country in Europe and beyond, with colleagues willing to share their efforts freely and generously for the benefit of our science. This is the sort of legacy which provides a network of goodwill like nothing else, it seems, can.

FEBS wishes you a relaxing retirement and all the best for the future. What's next?

I'm still active in a number of UCL societies, am beginning again to take a more active role in local politics, and have joined a very active local branch of the U3A (University of the Third Age). I've even begun the long-neglected task of weeding my filing systems! With two (and soon to be three) of our children along with four grandchildren settled in Australia, extended trips to the antipodes will be much easier to schedule too.

And Goodbye to Louise McSeveny

Louise McSeveny worked for over ten years in the FEBS Treasury under Dr John Mowbray. Among her various roles there in administering FEBS finances, she had the key ongoing responsibilities of arranging payments for FEBS Fellowships and the numerous FEBS Youth Travel Fund grants – notching up thousands of European banking transactions in the process. She was also kept busy with behind the scenes work on the FEBS website, publicity and a huge number of daily email enquiries.

FEBS greatly appreciates her hard work over the years, and wishes her all the best for the future.

Highs and Lows?

High? Great people, great travel and great friends. Lows? That would be telling, wouldn't it?

Favourite Congress City?

Istanbul – East meets West for bargain shopping

Top tip to YTF applicants?

Read the guidelines!

What's next for you?

A long holiday



FEBS Fellowships news

FEBS Long-Term Fellowships: outcome of the autumn call

Applications for Long-Term Fellowships continue to thrive. In the last call, a total of 136 applications were received, of which 103 (from 25 different countries) complied with the guidelines (listed on the FEBS website at <http://www.febs.org/index.php?id=301> and associated pages). The most common reasons for non-compliance were lack of mobility, or current/proposed research institutes outside the FEBS area. Applicants should be aware that, except in the case of Return-to-Europe Fellowships, FEBS Fellowships require that the home and host laboratories are in different countries within the FEBS area (for Constituent Societies of FEBS, go to <http://www.febs.org/index.php?id=74>). Another common reason for non-compliance was to be already at the host institute, or to have been awarded a PhD more than six years prior to the time of application, without documenting valid career breaks. The crop of new Long-Term Fellows from this call totals 16.

Return-To-Europe Fellowships: length of stay outside Europe up to four years

Return-To-Europe Fellowships are the newest addition to the FEBS Fellowships portfolio. They are for two years and aim to support outstanding scientists who have left the European area for post-doctoral training elsewhere and wish to return to Europe with a view to pursuing an independent research career. Although still an experimental scheme, the number of applications has been increasing steadily, leading to the recent decision of operating two calls, in spring and autumn (April 1st and October 1st), at the same time as the calls for Long-Term Fellowships. At its last meeting, the Fellowships Committee reflected on the applications received for these Fellowships and the feedback from applicants (and also from excluded would-be applicants) and felt that it would be

desirable to accept a longer period outside Europe, of up to four years. Although still needing the endorsement of the Executive Committee of FEBS, this change, together with small changes in the application (inclusion of a brief outline of achievements during the period outside Europe), are expected to be operative for the spring call 2012.

The FEBS Fellowships Committee is extended by three members

As a result of the escalating number of Fellowship applications and the increasing diversity of the topics covered by the FEBS community, FEBS Council has approved an increase in the size of the Fellowships Committee by the addition of three new members. The committee is now composed of the Chairperson, eleven Members and the two Ex-Officio Members (the FEBS Secretary General and the FEBS Treasurer).

On track for the first Fellows meeting

As already publicized in the last issue of *FEBS News*, a yearly meeting of FEBS Long-Term and Return-To-Europe Fellows is being planned as a first trial step towards increasing the sense of collegiality within FEBS and to encourage scientific exchange between Fellows. The meeting will take place from 1st to 4th September 2012 in Costa Ballena, Spain – a beach resort on the Atlantic shore of Andalusia, very close to the Jerez De La Frontera airport (a haven for cheap flights) and only about 100 km from Sevilla. Participants are expected to attend also the joint 22nd IUBMB and 37th FEBS Congress in Sevilla (4–9 September 2012).

Vicente Rubio
Chair,

FEBS Fellowships Committee
febsfellowships@ibv.csic.es



- **FEBS Long-Term Fellowships:** awarded to support long-term visits for scientific collaboration or advanced training; originally granted for 1 year and may be renewed for a further year up to a maximum of 3 years. FEBS Long-term Fellows are eligible for the **FEBS Distinguished Young Investigator Award** for excellence in research, and **FEBS Fellowship Follow-up Research Fund** grants towards research costs on return to work in their country of origin.
- **FEBS Return-to-Europe Fellowships:** awarded to support scientists who left the European area for post-doctoral training elsewhere but now wish to return to Europe for a second post-doctoral position; granted for 2 years.

For more details on these and also FEBS Short-Term Fellowships, see the Fellowships section of the FEBS website: <http://www.febs.org/index.php?id=81>

FEBS Advanced Courses 2012



Over 20 courses and workshops are being financially supported in 2012 by the FEBS Advanced Courses programme at interesting locations across Europe, with topics drawing on all aspects of the molecular life sciences – from fundamental studies of biomolecules, to analysis of pathological processes, to bioinformatics. The courses are organized by outstanding scientists and are of particular benefit to those at an early stage of a career in science. Participation of young scientists and PhD students in most of these events can be supported by FEBS Youth Travel Fund (YTF) grants if applicants are members of FEBS Constituent Societies. Members of IUBMB-related national societies from Asia, the Americas and Africa may be awarded FEBS Trans-Continental YTF grants. Applications for these awards should be addressed directly to the organizer of each course. As the planning of these events advances, more details and links to the individual course websites are being added to the 2012 Courses section of the FEBS website (<http://www.febs.org/index.php?id=649>). Also check out the FEBS website for more information on YTF grants.

Advanced Lecture Courses and Joint FEBS/EMBO Lecture Courses

These courses focus on teaching and training. Participants intensively interact with invited scientific leaders in the field during oral presentations, poster sessions, roundtable discussions and tutorials.

Advanced Lecture Courses

High Performance Proteomics

Varna, Italy

August 19–25, 2012

Organizer: Dr Bernhard Kuster, [Email](#)

Course website: www.proteomic-basics.eu/

Deadline for applications: May 15, 2012

Sofia School of Protein Science: Structure and Dynamics of Biological Macromolecules

Sofia, Bulgaria

September 9–14, 2012

Organizer: Dr Andrey Karshikoff

Course website: www.febs2012.com

Deadline for applications: June 1, 2012

Pathogen–Host Interactions of Major Animal Infectious Diseases and Zoonoses

Spetses, Greece

September 9–15, 2012

Organizer: Dr Joachim Frey, [Email](#)

Course website: <http://www.kas.unibe.ch/FEBS2012/>

Deadline for applications: June 15, 2012

Lipid Signalling and Cancer

Sorrento (Naples), Italy

October 4–10, 2012

Organizer: Dr Daniela Corda, [Email](#)

Deadline for applications: July 17, 2012

Jaak Järv
Chair,

FEBS Advanced Courses Committee
advanced.courses@febs.org



Joint FEBS/EMBO Lecture Courses

Mesosopic Origins of Cell Behaviors during Tissue Morphogenesis: Biochemical Circuits and Mechanics

Cargèse, France

April 30 – May 5, 2012

Organizer: Dr Pierre-François Lenne, [Email](#)

Mitochondria in Life, Death and Disease

Fodele, Crete, Greece

May 9–13, 2012

Organizer: Dr Kostas Tokatlidis, [Email](#)

Course website: <http://events.embo.org/12-mitochondria>

Deadline for applications: February 20 (YTF) or
March 1, 2012

Novel Biophysical Approaches in the Investigation of the Cytoskeleton

27th European Cytoskeletal Forum Meeting

Pecs, Hungary

November 3–7, 2012

Organizer: Dr Miklos Nyitrai, [Email](#)

Deadline for applications: June 30, 2012



FEBS Practical Courses and Combined Practical & Lecture Courses

These have a strong hands-on training element and aim to teach basic and advanced techniques in molecular biosciences.

Practical Courses

Advanced Methods in Macromolecular Crystallization – V

Nove Hradý, Czech Republic

June 22–29, 2012

Organizer: Dr Ivana Kutá Smatanová, [Email](#)

Deadline for applications: March 31, 2012

Bioinformatics for the Bench Biologist

Dubrovnik, Croatia

September 3–8, 2012

Organizer: Dr Kristian Vlahoviček, [Email](#)

Course website: <http://www.bioinfo.hr/febs>

Deadline for applications: May 1, 2012

Combined Practical & Lecture Courses

Physical Chemistry of Biointerfaces – PhysChemBio II

San Sebastian, Spain

July 10–14, 2012

Organizer: Dr Ilya Reviakine, [Email](#)

Course website: <http://www.cicbiomagune.es/PhysChemBio/>

Deadline for applications: March 15, 2012

Microspectroscopy: Visualization of Protein Dynamics in Living Cells

Wageningen, The Netherlands

September 4–13, 2012

Organizer: Dr J.W. Borst, [Email](#)

Course website: www.microspectroscopy-course.eu

Deadline for applications: July 1, 2012

Fundamentals of Modern Methods of Biocrystallography – BioCrys2012

Oeiras, Portugal

October 20–27, 2012

Organizer: Dr Maria Arménia Carrondo, [Email](#)

Deadline for applications: July 31, 2012

FEBS Special Meetings

These address timely topics of high scientific interest aimed at a larger number of participants and with a speaker programme featuring the leading scientists in a given field. There are also poster sessions and oral presentations based on selected abstracts.

ATP-Binding Cassette (ABC) Proteins: from Multidrug Resistance to Genetic Disease – ABC2012

Innsbruck, Austria; March 3–9, 2012

Organizer: Karl Kuchler

cdl.univie.ac.at/abc2012/

FEBS Workshops

FEBS Workshops address topics of high current scientific interest, bringing together experts and interested young scientists. The talks, poster sessions and discussions take place in an informal atmosphere.

Microbial Lipids: Diversity in Structure and Function

Bern, Switzerland

May 16–19, 2012

Organizer: Dr Peter Bütikofer, [Email](#)

Course website: <http://www.eurofedlipid.org/meetings/bern2012/index.htm>

Deadline for applications: March 1, 2012

Mitochondrial Biochemistry, Physiology and Pathology

Cambridge, UK

July 6–12, 2012

Organizer: Dr Guy Brown, [Email](#)

Course website: www.mitophysiology.org

Deadline for applications: March 1 (YTF) or May 1, 2012

Noncoding RNA in Transcription, Chromatin and Epigenetics

Aarhus, Denmark

August 6–10, 2012

Organizer: Dr Torben Heick Jensen, [Email](#)

Deadline for applications: May 15, 2012

Lipids: from Lipidomics to Disease and Green Energy

Spetses, Greece

August 23–29, 2012

Organizer: Dr Bernd Helms, [Email](#)

Course website: <http://www.febs-lipids.org/>

Deadline for applications: June 1, 2012

New Developments in RNA Biology: State of the Art and Future Perspectives

Tavira, Portugal

September 1–4, 2012

Organizer: Dr M. Leonor Cancela, [Email](#)

Course website: <http://www.febs2012rna.org/>

Deadline for applications: June 1, 2012

Dynamics of Cell Signal Systems

Oslo, Norway

September 27–30, 2012

Organizer: Dr Kjetil Taskén, [Email](#)

Deadline for applications: August 13, 2012

Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms in Angiogenesis

Capri (Naples), Italy

October 14–17, 2012

Organizer: Dr Maria Patrizia Stoppelli, [Email](#)

Course website: capri2012.igb.cnr.it/

Deadline for applications: July 15, 2012

Protein Quality Control and Ubiquitin Systems in Health and Disease

Kusadasi, Aydin, Turkey; November 14–16, 2012

Organizer: Dr Petek Ballar, [Email](#)

Course website: www.febs-ub2012.org

Deadline for applications: September 28, 2012

FEBS Working Group on Integration: recent visits and initiatives

The FEBS Working Group on Integration (WGI) explores ways of assisting researchers in the molecular life sciences who are working in Eastern countries of the FEBS area where research and education can be significantly affected by limited financial support. In autumn 2011, Lithuania and Armenia were visited by a FEBS delegation comprising: WGI members Tatiana Borisova, Jolanta Baranska, Jerka Dumić Belamarić (Armenia only) and Mathias Sprinzl; the FEBS Education Committee Chair Gül Güner-Akdoğan; the FEBS Advanced Courses Committee Chair Jaak Järv; and either the FEBS Secretary General Israel Pecht (Lithuania) or the FEBS Treasurer John Mowbray (Armenia).

Vilnius, Lithuania

The visit of the FEBS WGI to Vilnius, Lithuania, from 15th to 16th September 2011, was very well prepared and organized by Rimantas Daugelavicius, President of the Lithuanian Society for Biochemistry (LSB), and Vida Mildaziene, Secretary of the LSB.

The aim of the visit was to discuss and evaluate molecular life sciences in Lithuania, and in particular the problems of tertiary education in this discipline. The trip focused on visits to two institutes of two universities devoted to bachelor, master and postgraduate degree education, and one large biotech company. There were also opportunities to meet representatives of other academic institutions, as well as politicians.

The Institute of Biotechnology, Vilnius University

Detailed information about the history and present structure of the institute was provided by Director Prof. K. Sasnauskas, as well as leaders of the Laboratories of Protein Nucleic Acid Interaction, DNA Modification, Genetic Engineering, and Biothermodynamics, and this was followed by a



Rimantas Daugelavicius and Vida Mildaziene of the Lithuanian Society for Biochemistry.

roundtable discussion with MSc and PhD students. A presentation about FEBS activities was given by M. Sprinzl, and a lively discussion with teachers, students and scientists ensued.

The Institute of Biotechnology has its roots in the All Union Research Institute of Applied Enzymology. It was restructured and renamed in 1992 to become the Institute of Biotechnology (IBT). From originally about 700 employees it now has 145 staff members, with 82 research staff members and 48 researchers. In 2010 the institute was fully integrated into Vilnius University. IBT, with its focus to enzyme technologies, possesses excellent modern equipment, including X-ray crystallography and modern computational facilities. Running costs were covered in 2009 by foreign grants (€1.75 million), state subsidy (€1.35 million), the Lithuanian Science Foundation (€0.9 million) and other sources (€0.2 million) (data are from IBT Report 2008–2010). Looking back over a longer period, 70% of resources have come from foreign sources and 30% from state budgets.

Members of IBT publish in international journals (~25–30 papers/year), and collaborate with a number of research groups in and outside Europe. There are currently 20 students involved in PhD studies at the institute, with a graduation rate of about three to five theses defended each year. IBT provides positions for 20 master degree students and gives laboratory courses for 30–40 students. Most of the research staff are involved in teaching.

IBT spin-off: ThermoFisher

IBT has successfully promoted the development of spin-off companies, with four successful companies established as a direct result of IBT research. The largest company, with several hundred employees, developed from the Lithuanian company Fermentas, which is today merged with the US company ThermoFisher Scientific. This is a true success story!

The FEBS WGI met the Director of Research and Development, Dr Arvydas Lubys, and senior colleagues, who described the activities of the Vilnius site of the company. Besides the production, research and commercial activities, there is lively communication with the LSB and IBT. ThermoFisher in Vilnius exemplifies the optimal route in conversion of a Soviet-type Academy Research Institute to an efficient, modern biotech company.

Vilnius University and Lithuanian Academy of Sciences

The Rector of Vilnius University, Prof. Benediktas Juodka, who is a bioorganic chemist, provided expert information about the Lithuanian higher education system and the Bologna reform, as well as insight into the history and facilities of the university.

The reception from the Rector was followed by a conference of the FEBS WGI delegation with the President of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Prof. V. Razumas, and Dr Albertas Zalys, Director of the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology from the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science. The FEBS Secretary General Israel Pecht described the organization and mission of FEBS. Further issues discussed were the successful transfer of the Academy of Sciences and its research institutes to an advisory institution of scholars representing Lithuanian science; efficient distribution of limited financial resources to reach groups with excellent research programmes; and institutional recognition, financial support and social integration for returning scientists and their families.

Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas

The FEBS WGI also met students, postdoctoral researchers, professors and other scientists at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences for a general discussion of FEBS' mission and activities.

A visit to the Laboratories of Cell Culture in the Institute of Cardiology, led by Dr V.A. Skeberdis, was followed by a reception by the Vice-Rector for Research Prof. V. Lesauskaitė (Head of the Laboratory of Molecular Cardiology).

The Lithuanian visit concluded with a reception by the Rector of Vytautas Magnus University, Prof. Kestutis Sidlauskas, an informal lunch with representatives of the LSB,

and an interview of the FEBS Secretary General by the local press.

Yerevan, Armenia

The FEBS WGI visited Yerevan, Armenia, from 6th to 8th October 2011. The aim of the visit was to gain insight into the organization, activities and structure of the Armenian Association of Biochemists (AAB). The visit provided an opportunity to meet young scientists and students, learn about their current concerns, and disseminate information about FEBS. The WGI also met office holders responsible for higher education and science, for general discussions. The FEBS delegation was accompanied by Prof. Guevork A. Kevorkian, Director of the H. Buniatian Institute of Biochemistry, National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (NAS RA), and Vice-President of AAB.

At the H. Buniatian Institute of Biochemistry, the FEBS WGI met Prof. Armen A. Galoyan, President



(top) The FEBS delegation meeting Lithuanian political representatives at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences; (bottom) FEBS WGI delegates with Armenian colleagues at the H. Buniatian Institute of Biochemistry, NAS RA.

of AAB, who provided information about the 50-year history of the institute and its main scientific achievements. The central topic of the institute has been the biochemistry and metabolism of brain tissue, which has culminated in current research focused on neuropeptides, their regulatory and metabolic role, pharmaceutical importance and medical application. Later, the WGI met with members of AAB, and also with Arsen Gasparian, President of the Young Biologists Association NGO, and others who had successfully organized the FEBS Advanced Lecture Course 'Trends in Genetics: Genomic Instability and Pathways of Response'. The meeting with members of the Young Biologists Association was arranged at the request of FEBS and provided a good opportunity to discuss current and future directions of the AAB.

At Yerevan State University (YSU), the FEBS WGI visited the Departments of Biochemistry, Biophysics and Human Genetics and Cytology and met professors and students. FEBS also had the opportunity to meet the President of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Academician Radik M. Martirosyan, who provided general information about the present situation in Armenian science. Up to 1990, the financial support of science in Armenia was 2.3% of GDP. Today it is only 0.2%, and most republics of the Caucasus region are experiencing a similar situation. The Academy of Sciences, as the main contributor to national science research, should, according to Academician Martirosyan, cooperate but not merge with universities.

The meeting with the President of the Academy was followed by a scientific conference to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the H. Buniatian Institute of Biochemistry. The invited lecture was presented by Prof. Tatiana Borisova (member of FEBS WGI), who spoke on 'Changes in glutamate transport in cholesterol-deficient brain nerve terminals'. This lecture was followed by presentations of current research work of several young scientists and PhD students from the institute, which provided a useful picture of current research topics in Armenian life sciences.

Assistance to biochemists residing in HINARI B countries

In order to stimulate participation of (mainly young) biochemists from HINARI B countries in international scientific activities, the FEBS Executive Committee decided at its meeting held on 26th

November 2011 to provide additional financial support to facilitate access to scientific literature, and to improve networking and communication by enabling participation in the FEBS Congress and other FEBS activities. According to the latest figures of the World Bank, support can be provided to members of following FEBS Constituent Societies: Association of Armenian Biochemists, Association of Georgian Biochemists, Azerbaijan Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Macedonian Biochemical Society, and Ukrainian Biochemical Society.

FEBS assistance to HINARI B countries*

- Assistance for electronic access to scientific literature in the area of life sciences amounting to US\$1000 per institute will be covered by FEBS for institutes in which scientists are members of the national biochemical society. Applications containing information about the applying institution (total number of scientists and students, number of registered members of the national biochemical society, library facilities and available Internet connection) should be directed by the national biochemical society to the FEBS WGI.
- FEBS Youth Travel Fund (YTF) awards have previously focused on support for scientists travelling from a different country to attend FEBS Advanced Courses. 'Internal YTFs' will now be available for local workshops allowing presentation of scientific work by young scientists and PhD students. Applications by a national biochemical society, amounting maximally to €5000 per workshop, should be directed to the Advanced Courses Committee (advanced.courses@febs.org).
- A reduction of 50% in the registration fee will be provided for a limited number of participants from HINARI B countries at the annual FEBS Congress. This will be covered by financial support of up to €20,000, provided by FEBS to FEBS Congress organizers.

*Hinari is an initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO), and is short for **H**Health **I**nter**N**etwork **A**ccess to **R**esearch **I**nitiative.

At the recent FEBS Executive Committee meeting, it was also agreed that the FEBS Scientific Apparatus Recycling Programme (SARP) in its present form will be terminated. However, donations of scientific instrumentation as part of an ongoing collaborative project will be supported by FEBS by covering the costs for transportation. Applications should be directed to the FEBS WGI.

Mathias Sprinzl
Chair, FEBS Working Group on Integration (WGI)
mathias.sprinzl@uni-bayreuth.de

FEBS Education Committee: recent and upcoming workshops

Following the productive educational events during the Torino FEBS Congress last year, in the autumn of 2011 the FEBS Education Committee organized two workshops on undergraduate and postgraduate 'Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education' at the request of FEBS Constituent Societies.

Slovakia (Smolenice–Bratislava): 12–13 September 2011

This two-day workshop, conceived during a FEBS WGI (Working Group on Integration) visit to Bratislava in October 2009, focused on three significant areas in education, as requested by the Slovak Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (SSBMB): 'post-graduate education', 'problem-based learning', and 'quality of education'. Keith Elliott, Jason Perret and Gül Güner-Akdoğan, supported by Mathias Sprinzl, were the workshop leaders from FEBS. The arrangements in the splendid castle of Smolenice were in the excellent hands of the SSBMB, represented by Prof. Jan Turna (President) and Prof. Marta Kollarova (Comenius University), and coordinated by Assoc. Prof. Katarina Mikusova. There were around 45 participants from all over Slovakia, as well as a few from the Czech Republic, with registration and accommodation for all participants kindly offered by the Society.

Postgraduate education was discussed from the point of view of training programmes, supervision (skills required in supervising, and expectations from PhD candidates), student perspectives, and quality, including on-going European projects addressing this.

A brief introduction was given on problem-based learning (PBL) and its applications. The main characteristics of PBL were compared with other educational methods. Two different ways of approaching PBL, the first with a lot of freedom and a second, more-structured approach, were presented. Keith Elliott and Gül Güner-Akdoğan demonstrated PBL applications in Manchester, UK, and Izmir, Turkey, respectively. Small groups of participants enjoyed working on real PBL cases to understand the mechanics. 'What is facilitation?' and 'How is it different from other



Slovakia workshop participants and FEBS workshop leaders on the beautiful sunny terrace of Smolenice castle.

educational techniques?' were points discussed after the PBL session. In addition, a brief discussion ensued on designing a PBL curriculum. Finally, the topic of 'quality indicators for education' was discussed in an interactive, stimulating session, over coffee.

In oral and written feedback obtained from the participants, over 90% of the participants rated the workshop as 'excellent' or 'very good'. The FEBS workshop leaders found the experience stimulating and productive. Our appreciation goes to our Slovakian hosts and the participants.

Slovenia (Ljubljana): 3–4 November 2011

This workshop arose from discussions at a FEBS Council Meeting with Prof. Marinka Drobnič-Košorok, President of the Slovenian Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and was very well coordinated by Assoc. Prof. Blaž Cigić, responsible for the educational activities of the Society. The workshop was held in the stimulating atmosphere of the large lecture room of Biotechnical Faculty, Jamnikarjeva 101, Ljubljana, using seminar rooms and laboratories for the small-group discussions. There were around 55 participants, mostly young scientists and PhD students from all over Slovenia. The workshop leaders from FEBS were Keith Elliott, Peter Ott, Karmela Barisic and Gül Güner-Akdoğan; in addition, support was kindly given by Felix Goni



Ljubljana Education Workshop: (top) participants and leaders; (bottom) small-group discussion.

(Past Chair, FEBS Publications Committee), Michel Claessens (Communication Head, ITER Organization, France) and Keith Burdett (Manchester University, UK). The topics of the two-day programme were ‘problem-based learning’, ‘scientific communication (writing a scientific article)’ and ‘communication of science to non-scientific audience’, as requested by the Society.

The PBL session was run in a similar way to the Slovakia workshop. The participants formed two small groups, and two cases, representing two different approaches to case writing, were used for discussion. While both cases were excellent for motivating learning through problem solving, there were differences in the way the cases were written. An Izmir case on obesity was structured in consecutive sections, each giving new data on the case, and asking questions for discussion, whereas the Manchester case on diabetes was less structured and allowed more space for independent learning.

Both groups worked well and enjoyed the way the PBL functioned. Teachers played the role of students and tried to think how students would receive this active learning process. They asked questions, discussed, formed hypotheses, approached the limit of their knowledge, and, finally, created learning issues on which to work independently till the next session. At the end, there was a discussion session for the whole group, and this time the teachers discussed the philosophy and mechanism of PBL from the pedagogical points.

Scientific communication was a new theme for the FEBS Education Committee to cover in a workshop. A great deal of thought was put into this session and the following objectives were set:

- to present recent developments related to science communication that are particularly (but not exclusively) relevant in Europe
- to provide an overview of new science

FEBS Education Workshops 2012

Izmir Workshop on Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education:

Trends in Undergraduate Biomolecular Science Education and Tips for Postgraduate Students and Beyond

Izmir, Turkey; 29–30 March, 2012

Hosted by Prof. Nazmi Özer, President of Turkish Biochemical Society

Coordinator: [Prof. Ferhan Sagin](#), Chair of Educational Events of Turkish Biochemical Society

<http://febseducationworkshopizmir.blogspot.com>

Yerevan Workshop on Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education

This workshop is planned for October 2012, and more information will follow.

Hosted by Prof. Guevork A. Kevorkian, Vice President, Armenian Society of Biochemists

Cambridge Workshop on Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education:

Innovations in Molecular Bioscience Education

Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, UK; 17–18 December, 2012

Hosted by Prof. Sir Alan Fersht, Cambridge University

Coordinator: [Prof. Francesco Michelangeli](#), The Biochemical Society

This workshop is being organized by the FEBS Education Committee in association with The Biochemical Society, and is dedicated to E.J. WOOD, the founding Chair of the FEBS Education Committee.



communication initiatives and address issues such as trends in science journalism, technology and communication, and public perception of science

- to discuss how to communicate science with a non-scientific audience
- to analyse specific case studies
- to share experiences and good educational practices in this area
- to discuss 'how to write and publish a scientific article from the Editor's point of view'

In oral and written feedback, 92% of the participants who filled in the questionnaires rated the workshop as 'excellent' or 'very good'. The FEBS workshop leaders were happy with the participation from those attending, as well as the warm hospitality of the hosts! Our deepest thanks go to the organizers as well as to the participants.

Educational activities in 2012

FEBS education workshops will take place in Turkey, Yerevan and the UK in 2012 (see box on previous page); all are open to interested participants from other countries as well. In addition, an exciting programme has been planned for the IUBMB–FEBS Congress in Sevilla in September 2012, in conjunction with the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB) and the Spanish Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (SEBBM) (see box below). For more details on these events, contact Prof. Gül Güner-Akdoğan (gul.guner@deu.edu.tr), Chair, FEBS Education Committee, or the local coordinators. More information on FEBS education events is also available on the [education pages](#) of the FEBS website.

Gül Güner-Akdoğan
Chair, FEBS Education Committee

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education Activities at the

22nd IUBMB Congress and 37th FEBS Congress: Sevilla, 4–9 September 2012

Plenary Lecture: Bruce Alberts (San Francisco, CA, USA)

Workshop. Teaching Molecular Evolution: a Unifying Principle of Biochemistry

Speakers: Juli Peretó (Valencia, Spain); Peter Schuster (Vienna, Austria)

Chairpersons: Keith Elliott (Manchester, UK); Athel Cornish-Bowden (Marseille, France)

A joint activity of the IUBMB Committee on Education, FEBS Education Committee and FEBS Science and Society Committee.

Workshop. Research into Effective Teaching Strategies: What Biochemistry is Learning from Other Sciences

Speakers: Joe (E.F.) Redish (MD, USA); Roy Tasker (Penrith, Australia); Kathleen M. Fisher (San Diego, CA, USA)
(*pending final confirmation*)

Chairpersons: Susan Hamilton (Brisbane, Australia); Manuel João Costa (Braga, Portugal)

A joint activity of the IUBMB Committee on Education and FEBS Education Committee.

Workshop. Science in School: Biodiversity and Evolution

This workshop will be run in Spanish and simultaneous translation will be provided.

Speakers: Pedro Jordano (Sevilla, Spain); Juli Peretó (Valencia, Spain)

Panel Discussion: Javier Fernández Portal (Madrid, Spain); Gérard Cobut (Brussels, Belgium); Dolores Vega (Sevilla, Spain); Isabel Varela Nieto (Madrid, Spain); Miguel Castanho (Lisbon, Portugal)

Chairpersons: Isabel Varela-Nieto (Madrid, Spain); Miguel Castanho (Lisbon, Portugal)

A joint activity of FEBS Education Committee, FEBS Science and Society Committee and SEBBM.

Poster Session: Biochemical Education

Communications in poster form from the above workshops, and other relevant communications.

More information: [Prof. Angel Herráez](#) (SEBBM Education Committee); [Prof. Gül Güner Akdoğan](#) (FEBS Education Committee); [Prof. Susan Hamilton](#) (IUBMB Education Committee)

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FEBS Science and Society Committee: debating funding

One area of interest of the FEBS Science and Society Committee is that of European science funding policies, particularly as the European Union's 7th Framework Programme enters its final stages and the start of the 8th Framework Programme, in 2014, draws closer. At the Science and Society Committee's meeting from 3rd to 4th

November 2011 in Barcelona, Spain, Dr Lars Rask from the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research presented his personal views on how to strengthen the EU Framework Programmes, mainly based on discussions within the Swedish academic research community; the principal points from his talk are presented here.

What lessons can be drawn from the 7th Framework Programme to optimize its successor?

The 7th Framework Programme for research and technological development (FP7) is the European Union's main instrument for funding research in Europe in the years 2007–2013. This programme, like its predecessors, was developed after extensive consultations with business sector communities, the scientific community, and research and policy-making institutions within EU countries. It has a considerably larger budget than the 6th Framework Programme and also some noticeable differences compared with the latter – the most conspicuous being the creation of the European Research Council as an important part of the programme. This article summarizes observations on FP7 from the perspective of scientists mainly involved in basic research, and, as well as commenting on strengths, makes suggestions to amend some of the perceived problems.

The European Research Council

The European Research Council (ERC) was created in 2006 to be the flagship of the 'Ideas' part of FP7. Its mission was to support the highest quality research in Europe through competitive funding and to support investigator-driven frontier research. The term 'frontier research' should be interpreted as research activities 'directed towards fundamental

advances at and beyond the frontier of knowledge'. Thereby, the ERC expects that its support should result in new and unpredictable scientific and technological discoveries. The ERC targets scientists already active in Europe as well as scientists willing to move to Europe.

It is clear that European scientists regard the ERC to be a success story. There are several reasons for this. The ERC supports research within all areas of science, scholarship and engineering. It emphasizes the quality of the idea rather than the research area and it works in a truly 'bottom-up' process. At the same time, the ERC has the ambition to 'nurture science-based industry and to create a greater impetus for the establishment of research-based spin-offs' – goals shared by all European countries.

The ERC programme portfolio is efficient by offering applications both to younger scientists ('Starting grants') and to their more experienced colleagues ('Advanced grants'). The newly introduced 'Synergy grants' to small groups of researchers nicely complement the individual-type grants. The fourth ERC funding scheme, called 'Proof of Concept', is open to researchers who have already been awarded an ERC grant. They can apply for additional funding to establish the innovation potential of ideas arising from their ERC-funded research projects.

An equally important factor in the high regard European scientists have for the ERC is that its reviewing process is perceived to be fair, conscientious and effective. In addition, the ERC has a 'hands-off' approach to grant management, something that facilitates the lives of both the grantees themselves and their host institutions.

The ERC budget amounts to approximately 15% of the total budget for FP7 and has increased since the start of the programme: in 2007 it was €300 million, and in 2013, the last year of FP7, it will reach €1700 million. Investigator-driven 'frontier research', within the framework of activities commonly understood as 'basic research', is a key driver of wealth and social progress, as it opens new opportunities for scientific and technological advance, and is instrumental in producing new knowledge leading to future applications and markets. The very high quality of the research projects funded within ERC programmes and the possibilities of obtaining ground-breaking results of large importance for new industry argue for the budget for the ERC within the 8th Framework Programme to be significantly increased, maybe to reach 25% of the total budget for that programme.

Collaborative research

The bulk of EU research funding in FP7 is going to collaborative

research within a programme with the demanding title 'European Excellence'. Its objectives are to establish excellent research projects and networks able to attract researchers and investments from the entire world. Participation in this type of programme is often regarded by scientists as a good way to achieve sustained international collaborations with important actors within many research areas. Other potential positive outcomes might be increased mobility of researchers, facilitated recruitment of young researchers, access to resources that allow new and large initiatives that few countries can finance on their own, and possibilities for developing and improving commercial and non-commercial applications to society.

Nevertheless, university researchers experience several problems with the collaborative research programmes, and the main ones are summarized here. First, the process for the selection of research areas to be announced in calls for application is seen as partly non-transparent. Distrust of scientists towards the selection of areas and writing of programme texts for the 'Collaborative research' programmes is potentially dangerous since it lowers the credibility of that idea, which in itself is good. Most university scientists question the influence of the large business sector organizations and their lobbyists on the selection of areas for calls and even on the announcement texts themselves. Their influence is too strong compared with that of university researchers, since business organizations are much more professional in their ways to influence the commission than groups of scientists, national research funding organizations and the like. Maybe it would be possible to use a more transparent process for the selection of research areas

and for the writing of the texts for calls for proposals based, for example, on consultations with the national research councils.

Second, the application procedures seem unnecessarily complex. Scientists usually have no difficulties describing the scientific part of the applications, but often need help with the writing of the 'soft' sections explaining how the EU benefits from their project or describing project management, or their university and department. Accordingly, many universities offer their scientists special templates with examples on how such sections should be written. Other universities engage consultants, who compose such sections. This situation must be regarded as undesirable. European scientists are not stupid. It is imperative that the format of the applications is simplified to allow trained scientists to write the entire applications on their own, without the need to hire well-paid consultants. Also, the project reports to the commission ought to be simplified.

Third, many scientists also find that the timeframes during which the calls for proposals are open are too short. Research groups that already have an established European network and ongoing national projects can cope with that, in contrast to groups that have a new project idea or young scientists who have not yet built a contact network. This might lead to a conservation of the research financed. Some researchers find that the areas open in the calls for proposals are too specific and narrow, such that their fields of interests are outside the calls. Within rapidly expanding fields like biotechnology, calls sometimes target specific topics that already are regarded as out of date before the call is closed.

Fourth, researchers often criticize grant evaluation processes in general, and, indeed, the decision

process for funding collaborative research projects is sometimes found to be unclear. Some researchers maintain that established contacts might be of importance for success in these programmes. If so, this is certainly unacceptable. Anyhow, there is room for improvements regarding the evaluation process. The commission should operate in line with the procedures used by the ERC for selection of evaluators, setting up large databases of evaluators from both academy and industry who are known to be highly competent within their specific areas. Under no circumstances should evaluators who volunteer to do the job be engaged.

European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures

The overall objective of the 'Research Infrastructures' part of the FP7 Capacities programme is to optimize the use and development of the best research infrastructures in Europe. Furthermore, it aims to help to create new research infrastructures of pan-European interest in all fields of science and technology. Given the importance of infrastructure development in Europe, it is encouraging that most scientists seem to have strong confidence in the roadmaps produced by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) and also in the research strategies published by it. That is probably due to the fact that the national representatives in ESFRI are well anchored in the national research councils and that they keep the national research communities well informed about ongoing priorities. In several countries, the ESFRI roadmap has been taken into account in the development of the national roadmap for infrastructure. It seems most efficient to limit the responsibility of ESFRI to heavy equipment facilities, such as accelerators, astronomic

observatories and so on, and to leave the discussions on other facilities such as national health registers and biobanks to other organizations, since health registers and biobanks containing human blood or tissue samples in most countries are under strict legal regulations that are more or less specific for the different European countries.

In conclusion

One of the strongest political arguments for the framework

programmes is their importance to strengthen European competitiveness both economically and scientifically. The programmes should function as an incitement for increased collaborations between scientists from the various European countries. It is therefore important to facilitate active participation of the scientific community in the formulation of calls for proposals within the programmes, to simplify application procedures and to develop transparent evaluation procedures

of the resulting applications. Only then will the large sums of money spent within the framework programmes lead to research results of the highest international standard. The procedures used by the ERC, which definitely deserves a higher budget, can serve as good examples.

*Dr Lars Rask
Executive Director of the Swedish
Foundation for Strategic Research
Member, FEBS Science and Society
Committee*

VIII Parnas Conference (27–31 August 2011)

The VIII Parnas Conference, organized for the first time jointly by the Polish Biochemical Society, the Ukrainian Biochemical Society and the Israel Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, was held in Warsaw, Poland, from 27th to 31st August 2011. The conference was supported by FEBS through its 3+ Meeting Programme.

Parnas Conferences have been organized since 1996 to commemorate the Polish biochemist Jakub Karol Parnas. Before WWII, Parnas was a Professor of Physiological Chemistry at Lwow University. At that time, Lwow was a Polish city with multinational inhabitants – particularly Polish, Jewish and Ukrainian. Due to political and historical circumstances, it was not a peaceful city, struggling with severe national animosities and anti-Semitism. In such an environment, Parnas' laboratory was a unique place where, in a friendly atmosphere, young Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish scientists successfully worked on glucose metabolism. It is quite symbolic that PFK (phosphofructokinase) was discovered by three young scientists of different nationalities from the Parnas laboratory: Ostern was Jewish, Terhakovec was Ukrainian, and Guthke was Polish. It inspired us to organize the first trilateral Polish–Ukrainian–Israeli Conference in order to commemorate not only Professor J.K. Parnas, the outstanding scientist and the great man, but also his collaborators.

The Conference was under the Honorary Patronage of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Science and Higher Education. The

Honorary Committee consisted of Ambassadors of Israel and Ukraine in Poland and the Polish Ambassadors in Israel and Ukraine as well as the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Mayor of Warsaw. It was an honour for the Organizers to welcome Professors Israel Pecht (FEBS Secretary General) and Maciej J. Nałęcz (Director of the UNESCO Division of Basic and Engineering Science).

The Scientific Committee, chaired by Prof. Andrzej Dżugaj (President of the Polish Biochemical Society, who conceived the idea of this trilateral Conference), consisted of three representatives from each of the organizing Societies. Poland was represented by Professors Leszek Kaczmarek, Jacek Kuźnicki and Maciej Żylicz; Ukraine by Professors Serhiy Komisarenko (President of the Ukrainian society), Serhiy Kosterin and Ganna Elska; and Israel by Professors Michael Eisenbach (President of the Israeli society), Orna Elroy-Stein and Shimon Schuldiner. The Organizing Committee was headed by Professor Maria Jolanta Redowicz.

Two Nobel Prize Laureates – Professors Ada Yonath and Aaron Ciechanover – as well as Dr Aleksander Włodawer, a world-renowned crystallographer, were the Key Speakers. The following topics were addressed during the Conference: post-transcriptional regulation, bioinformatics in gene expression, gene expression and brain diseases, cell guidance, transporters in adaptation to hostile environment, protein structure and function, and calcium in signalling. The nearly 270 participants were predominantly from Poland, Ukraine and Israel. There were 27 lectures (besides the Key ones) in nine sessions, presented by



outstanding researchers – mainly with Polish, Ukrainian and Israeli roots. Also, 18 young researchers selected by the chairmen based on submitted abstracts gave oral presentations (two in each session). There were 134 posters presented in three sessions.

The organizers granted 50 fellowships to enable young researchers from Poland (16), Ukraine (21) and Israel (13) to attend the Conference by supporting their travel and accommodation costs. All the recipients were members of the national societies. Besides FEBS, the main supporters were the Nencki Institute of Experimental Biology headed by Prof. Adam Szewczyk (within the Regpot-Bioimagine Programme), and Polish Ministry for Science and Higher Education, as well as Sigma-Aldrich Polska and several other biotech companies.

This trilateral Conference was the first opportunity to gather researchers, especially young ones, from Poland, Ukraine and Israel and to break historical barriers. It was also a great forum for



Professors Ada Yonath and Aaron Ciechanover, who delivered keynote lectures entitled 'Thoughts about the origin of life and antibiotics resistance' and 'The ubiquitin proteolytic system – from basic mechanisms thru human diseases and onto drug development', respectively.

scientific information exchange and provided opportunities for establishing fruitful scientific collaborations between researchers from these countries.

Prof. Maria Jolanta Rędonicz
Head of the Organizing Committee

Prof. Andrzej Dżugaj
President of the Polish Biochemical Society

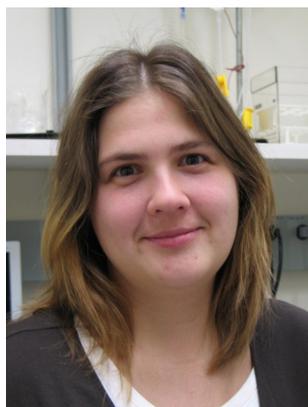
FEBS Anniversary Prizes (Torino, 2011)

FEBS Anniversary Prizes, provided by generous capital gifts from Boehringer Mannheim GmbH and Eppendorf Gerätebau Netheler & Hinz GmbH, are awarded for outstanding achievements in the field of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, or related sciences. The prizewinners are selected by FEBS and the Gesellschaft für Biochemie und Molekularbiologie (GBM) from among researchers invited to give a lecture at one of the symposia or workshops held during a FEBS Congress. Prize winners are awarded €2,000.

The prizewinners from the 36th FEBS Congress in Torino, 2011, are **Dr Geoffrey J. Faulkner** (Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK) and **Dr Ira Milosevic** (HHMI and Yale University Medical School, CT, USA). Congratulations!

For details of other FEBS medals and prizes, see the [Awards](#) page of the FEBS website.

Dr Geoff Faulkner presented a novel approach to map the activity of mobile genetic elements in human brain cells. These mutations cause the brain to form a somatic mosaic, where each cell of the brain is genetically distinct from its neighbours. Dr Faulkner's team are currently investigating whether these mutations have a role in tumour formation.



Dr Ira Milosevic presented novel insights on roles of the endocytic machinery, which is essential in synaptic vesicle recycling and neurotransmission. Animal models of defective endocytosis show severe neurological deficits, including epilepsy, ataxia and neurodegeneration. Dr Milosevic is currently studying the mechanisms by which alterations in endocytosis lead to neurodegenerative pathologies.



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Sevilla 2012

Congress
22nd IUBMB
37th FEBS

**From Single Molecules
To Systems Biology**



International Union
of Biochemistry
and Molecular Biology



Sociedad Española
de Bioquímica y
Biología Molecular



Federation of European
Biochemical Societies



Sociedade
Portuguesa
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www.iubmb-febs-2012.org

Sevilla, Spain * September 4 - 9, 2012



IUBMB–FEBS Congress 2012

REGISTRATION OPENS
1 FEBRUARY 2012

Congress
37th 22nd IUBMB
FEBS
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Sevilla 2012
4 - 9 September

From 4th to 9th September 2012, Sevilla will become the world capital of biochemistry and molecular biology, as the location of the joint 37th FEBS and 22nd IUBMB Congress. The meeting is being organized by the Spanish Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (SEBBM), along with the Portuguese Society for Biochemistry (SPB) as a partner society. In this interview, Prof. Miguel Ángel De la Rosa, Chair of the Organizing Committee, presents the plans and aims for this unique event. Registration is now open!

What are the main scientific goals set by the Organizing Committee?

The joint IUBMB–FEBS 2012 Congress aims to promote an integrative and holistic approach to research on biological processes. Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity will thus be key elements at this meeting. Under the theme ‘From Single Molecules to Systems Biology’, we have arranged an extraordinary scientific program that comprehensively covers the latest advances in bioscience research.

Could you tell us more about the Scientific Program?

The Scientific Program is ambitious and has been developed to attract not only biochemists, but also biologists, physiologists, chemists, physicists and mathematicians. The program looks towards the future with a series of novel topics such as **Global Regulation and Cell Reprogramming, Artificial Cells and Genomes, and Computing with Molecules and Cells**. It also highlights the social and economic impact of biochemistry.

Standing out among the impressive list of lecturers are the following **Nobel Laureates**: Tim Hunt, Ferid Murad, Ada Yonath, Hamilton Smith, Robert Huber and Venki Ramakrishnan. In addition, **Symposium** presentations will be delivered by internationally recognized experts, with the aim of providing general overviews of the state-of-the-art in each of the following research fields: **Single Molecules, Trends in Biochemistry, Beyond Biochemistry, Molecular Bases of Diseases, and Environmental Biochemistry**.

In the same context, **Workshops** have been organized to allow senior and young scientists to exchange knowledge, establish new networks and



Plaza de España, Sevilla

explore the possibilities of developing new lines of research and novel methodologies. Workshops will be held on the following topics: **Omic Sciences** (Functional Genomics, Proteomics and Signal Transduction, Metabolomics), **Biochemistry in Medical Diagnosis and Therapy**, and **Systems Biology**.

What is planned beyond the research-related topics?

There will be a range of other thought-provoking activities alongside the core scientific program for those with broader interests, including events organized by the FEBS Science and Society, Education, and Women in Science (WISE) Committees or Working Groups. The **Science and Society workshops** will discuss AIDS and Malaria, stressing both the scientific aspects of the diseases and their social impact. At the **Education workshops**, one focus will be the teaching of evolution. Distinguished scholars have been invited to give talks and there will opportunities for discussions among panelists and interested participants. Moreover, Bruce Alberts – one of the original authors of the classic undergraduate textbook *Molecular Biology of the Cell*, Editor-in-Chief of *Science* and one of President Obama’s first three

Science Envoys – will deliver a plenary lecture on science education. The FEBS WISE group is helping to organize a **Portrait Gallery** to honour 24 outstanding female scientists who have played crucial roles in the development of biochemistry worldwide.

There will also be a series of Specific Activities at the Congress, such as **Guided Poster Tours**, the **Speakers' Corner** and **Corporate Seminars**, with the aim of promoting discussion amongst delegates, corporate partners and exhibitors.

Finally, under the umbrella of the 'Biochemistry in the City' initiative, a number of **Science for Non-Scientist Activities** will take place in parallel with the main Congress events. These activities include 'Genes in the Bottle', to which the general public from Sevilla will be invited, and other **Events Open to the General Public**, such as the 'And You? Me, a Biochemist!' course, to which some of the best high-school students from the province of Sevilla will be invited to participate. All in all, the goal is to bring biochemistry closer to people, as well as to inspire the biochemists of tomorrow.

How is the Congress organization exploiting IT developments?

To maximize the delegate experience at the meeting, an **App** is being planned that will be accessible from delegate laptops, tablets, smartphones and more. Furthermore, we have built social network profiles on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to strengthen channels of communication. To facilitate the presentation of delegates' posters, we intend to provide a service titled '**Print your poster in situ**'.

Additionally, with the aim of avoiding lengthy exchanges of notifications via e-mail or fax during the **Registration** process, we have built an accessible online registration system on our [website](#) to offer delegates a user-friendly experience. The online **Registration** system allows participants to register, manage the submission and corrections of abstracts within the periods set by the organization, book accommodation and social events, and also check their reservations and payments. Participants will have direct access at any time to their **Private Area** by entering their username and password. Registration is now open.

How will the Congress facilitate colleague participation?

FEBS will award a **50% reduction in registration fees to members of Biochemical Societies from**

the HINARI B countries. Since the number of registrants that can benefit from this reduction is limited, we recommend eligible scientists register as soon as possible.

Likewise, **Bursaries** will be available for young scientists (age limit 35). These bursaries will cover the registration fees of the recipients, who must present an abstract as first author during the registration process. Travel and accommodation will not be covered by these bursaries.

In addition, an Evaluation Committee will select **125 young scientists** from hundreds of applicants to attend a joint IUBMB–FEBS pre-Congress meeting: the **YSP2012/12thYSF**. Travel and accommodation expenses as well as the registration fee of the subsequent IUBMB–FEBS Congress will also be supported for these up-and-coming scientists.

During the days of the Congress, a **Child Care Service** will be provided at the venue to facilitate parents' active participation in Congress events. This service was provided for the first time at the 36th FEBS Congress in Torino (Italy) 2011. Parents wishing to use this service are asked to make a reservation online during the registration process.

Are any Satellite Meetings scheduled?

From 24th to 26th May 2011, a Trans-Atlantic Meeting on Biochemistry and Molecular Biology was held in which a wonderful exchange of information and ideas took place among representatives of national and international biochemical societies, including the FEBS Secretary General and FEBS Congress Counsellor. The aim was to secure the active participation of the best scientists from the opposite shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

On 7th September 2012, as part of the activities related to the Bio-NMR EC Project, an '**NMR in Biology**' Meeting will be held with the aim of presenting the powerful analytical capability provided today by NMR to the broad biological community, together with the opportunity for biologists to access NMR infrastructures participating in Bio-NMR.

From 1st to 4th September 2012, an international **FEBS Workshop on 'New Developments in RNA Biology: State of the art and future perspectives'** will take place in Tavira, Portugal. Travel arrangements will be made for those interested in attending the IUBMB–FEBS 2012 Congress in Sevilla. Travelling from Tavira to Sevilla is quite simple and takes only a few hours by bus.

In your opinion, what are the host city's principal attractions?

Sevilla will certainly make an impression on those colleagues visiting for the first time. It has a remarkable historic and artistic legacy preserved in the numerous museums and monuments like the Cathedral (the largest gothic structure in Europe), the Archive of the Indies, and the Plaza de España. But contemporary art, modern architecture, and innovation are very evident in the city too.

Congress participants will be able to enjoy strolling along the Guadalquivir riverside or through the city's charming old districts. Another highly attractive feature of Sevilla is the great variety of tapas (small savoury dishes) served at bars throughout the city. As the capital city of Andalusia, the birthplace of flamenco, Sevilla has flamenco shows on a nightly basis, and there are also strong links to opera, with several major works, including Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, linked to the city or area.

Proud of our cultural and artistic heritage, we have prepared a fabulous social program for the Congress, including tapas tours, walking and biking tours, flamenco shows, and visits to wine cellars, as well as day trips to other Andalusian cities such as Córdoba, Cádiz, Málaga and Granada.



The old and the new in Sevilla: (top) The Giralda is an example of the mixture of cultures that makes up Sevilla – a former minaret that was converted into the cathedral bell tower; (bottom) Metropol Parasol, completed in 2011, is the world's largest wooden structure, built over a traditional market.

What does it mean to the SEBBM to be the hosting national society responsible for organizing this Congress?

It is a real honour for the Spanish Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. SEBBM, as one of the FEBS founding societies, has already organized two successful FEBS meetings (Madrid in 1969, and Barcelona in 1996), and is now excited to host this very prestigious joint 22nd IUBMB and 37th FEBS Congress in Sevilla. In this context, we are very proud that Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and the Princess of Asturias accepted to chair the Honorary Committee. This certainly is a great support.

What are your hopes and expectations for the Congress?

We are working intensively to make this Congress a most outstanding experience that lives up to the highest expectations of the participants. We are convinced that this meeting will offer a singular opportunity for the attendees to engage in fruitful discussions, as well as establish new friendships and collaborations.

*Interview by Idalino Rocha
Chair's Office*

22nd IUBMB & 37th FEBS Congress
<http://www.iubmb-febs-2012.org/>

Dear Fellow Scientists,

We wish you a happy and successful New Year!

New Members of the Editorial Board



From January 2012 the new Reviews Editor for *FEBS Journal* is **Professor Nick Tonks** (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, NY, USA) who is already an established member of the Editorial Board. Professor Tonks will also assume the new position

of Associate Editor, working with Professor Richard Perham, Editor-in-Chief. We encourage you to contact him at tonks@cshl.edu with your ideas for journal reviews. Professor Tonks is also currently coordinating a *FEBS Journal* Special Issue on *Protein Phosphatases*, which is due to be published later in 2012.

At the end of 2011, two longstanding members of the Editorial Board completed their final terms of office. **Professor Ferdinand Hucho** (Freie Universität, Berlin) has been a member of the Board and Reviews Editor for three successive 5-year terms, and **Professor Carmen Birchmeier** (Max-Delbrück-Center for Molecular Medicine, Berlin) completed two 5-year terms. We thank them most warmly for their invaluable contributions to the journal and wish them continuing success in their future activities.

Two new Editors have been appointed: **Professor Alastair Aitken**, Professor of Protein Biochemistry in the University of Edinburgh, UK (neurodegenerative disease proteins, proteomics, protein chemistry and post-translational modifications, signal transduction complexes, 14-3-3 proteins) and **Professor Tony Tiganis**, NHMRC of Australia Principal Research Fellow in Monash University, Australia (tyrosine phosphorylation in cell signalling, especially leptin signalling and body weight



control, and insulin signalling and glucose homeostasis). More about our new Editors can be found on the [FEBS Journal website](http://www.febsjournal.org).

New-look website and the *FEBS Journal* Aims and Scope

The aims and scope of the journal were recently reviewed by the Editorial Board and the updated version can be found on our new-look website: <http://www.febsjournal.org>. *FEBS Journal* emphasizes its commitment to publishing first-class work with a molecular and/or mechanistic approach in all areas of the life sciences.

The breadth of topics published in the journal can be seen in the accompanying list of top-cited articles published in 2011.

Special Issues and accompanying Podcasts

Our first two *FEBS Journal* Special Issues were published at the end of last year: *Protein Structure and Proteomics*, compiled by Ettore Appella (NIH, Bethesda, USA) and Jan Johansson (Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden); and *Engineering Toxins for 21st Century Therapies*, compiled by Ravi Acharya (University of Bath, UK). These Special Issues are now accompanied by podcasts summarising their content, which you can access directly via the [FEBS Journal website](http://www.febsjournal.org).



Protein Structure and Proteomics



Engineering Toxins for 21st Century Therapies

Papers accepted for publication in forthcoming Special Issues, on *Cytochrome P450*, *Protein Phosphatases* and *Systems Biology*, can be found appropriately labelled either on our [Accepted Articles](#) webpage or on [Early View](#). These are based on the following meetings that took place in 2011: *International Symposium on Cytochrome P450*, Manchester, UK; *Europhosphatases 2011*, Baden, Austria; and *The 12th International Conference on Systems Biology*, Heidelberg/Mannheim, Germany.



Reviews and minireviews

Reviews and minireviews published thus far in *FEBS Journal* in 2012 are:

Reviews

[Intrinsic regulation of hemoglobin expression by variable subunit interface strengths](#), J.M. Manning, A.M. Popowicz, J.C. Padovan, B.T. Chait & L.R. Manning (Vol. 279/3)

THE FEBS/EMBO WOMEN IN SCIENCE AWARD

[How myosin motors power cellular functions – an exciting journey from structure to function: Based on a lecture delivered at the 34th FEBS Congress in Prague, Czech Republic, July 2009](#), P. Llinas, O. Pylypenko, T. Isabet, M. Mukherjea, H.L. Sweeney & A.M. Houdusse (Vol. 279/4)

Minireview Series

[Src family kinases in the nervous system](#), coordinated by Xian-Min Yu & Bradley R. Groveman (Vol. 279/1)

[Quality control of protein folding](#), coordinated by Franziska Kriegenburg (Vol. 279/4)

All reviews and minireviews in *FEBS Journal* can be read online and downloaded free of charge from the time of publication, via a hotlink from [FEBS Journal website](#).

Editorial Office news

We have both bad news and good news to report from the Editorial Office. We are very sorry to say goodbye to Anne-Marie Bruyns, who has resigned recently from the staff because of illness, from which she is still recovering. We thank her for her excellent work in the running of the journal and wish her all the best for a full recovery. In her place, we welcome Dr Gillian Ragsdale as the new Deputy Editorial Manager.

Please join us in congratulating Juanita Goossens-Roach and her husband, Nick, on the recent birth of their baby Roxanne, the first *FEBS Journal* Editorial Office baby! We are pleased to welcome Lucy White, who has stepped in as Editorial Assistant in Juanita's absence on maternity leave.

With best wishes from us all at *FEBS Journal*,

Richard Perham, Editor-in-Chief
Vanessa Wilkinson, Editorial Manager
Gillian Ragsdale, Deputy Editorial Manager
Giannina Bartlett, Editorial Assistant
Juanita Goossens-Roach, Editorial Assistant
Lucy White, Editorial Assistant

FEBS Journal top-cited articles 2011

[Roles of matrix metalloproteinases in cancer progression and their pharmacological targeting](#), C. Gialeli, A.D. Theocharis & N.K. Karamanos (Vol. 278/1)

[Regulation of matrix metalloproteinase activity in health and disease](#), E. Hadler-Olsen, B. Fadnes, I. Sylte, L. Uhlin-Hansen & J.-O. Winberg (Vol. 278/1)

[Role of the *caq*-pathogenicity island encoded type IV secretion system in *Helicobacter pylori* pathogenesis](#), N. Tegtmeyer, S. Wessler & S. Backert (Vol. 278/8)

[Activation, regulation, and inhibition of DYRK1A](#), W. Becker & W. Sippl (Vol. 278/2)

[TNFR1-induced activation of the classical NF-kappa B pathway](#), H. Wajant & P. Scheurich (Vol. 278/6)

[MNB/DYRK1A as a multiple regulator of neuronal development](#), F.J. Tejedor & B. Haemmerle (Vol. 278/2)

[The role of DYRK1A in neurodegenerative diseases](#), J. Wegiel, C.-X. Gong & Y.-W. Hwang (Vol. 278/2)

[Structural evidence of alpha-aminoacylated lipoproteins of *Staphylococcus aureus*](#), M. Asanuma, K. Kurokawa, R. Ichikawa, K.-H. Ryu, J.-H. Chae, N. Dohmae, B.L. Lee & H. Nakayama (Vol. 278/5)

[Silintaphin-1-interaction with silicatein during structure-guiding bio-silica formation](#), U. Schlossmacher, M. Wiens, H.C. Schroeder, X. Wang, K.P. Jochum & W. Mueller (Vol. 278/7)

FEBS *Letters*

Dear Fellow
Scientists,

Happy New Year! All of us at the *FEBS Letters* Editorial Office would like to wish you success and prosperity in 2012. We would also like to thank all of you who submitted manuscripts to our journal in 2011 (we received more than 2000 submissions!), reaffirming *FEBS Letters*' popularity in the field of molecular life sciences.

The past year has seen some changes in our Editorial Board, with two Editors, Robert Barouki and Giulio Superti-Furga, leaving their post after 9 and 12 years, respectively. It was an honour to have such distinguished scientists on our Board and we would like to deeply thank Robert and Giulio for their commitment and outstanding work, which had a great impact on the development and success of *FEBS Letters* in the past decade. Giulio Superti-Furga also served as Chairman of the Young Group Leader Award Committee and was

responsible for the coordination of the Award selection process.

In 2011 we worked hard on improving our editorial policies. We compiled an updated Guide for Authors, which outlines the journal's aims and scopes, and provides detailed technical information for manuscript preparation and submission. In addition, the emails that our authors receive from EES during the submission, evaluation and decision process have been streamlined and contain abundant information about the status of each manuscript. This feature is expected to be of great help to our reviewers and Editors as well. The updated Guide for Authors can be found at <http://www.febsletters.org/> and <http://www.journals.elsevier.com/febs-letters/>. Thanks to Elsevier, both journal sites were recently redesigned and now have a more modern and fresh look, and provide, along with essential journal information, additional content and full-text access on ScienceDirect.

Top 10 most downloaded articles in *FEBS Letters* (over the past 90 days at 25 January 2012)

For complete and up-to-date lists, go to the *FEBS Letters* website [most-read](#) and [most-cited](#) links.

[Bioinformatics analysis of mass spectrometry-based proteomics data sets](#)

5 June 2009

Chanchal Kumar | Matthias Mann

[p53 regulation by ubiquitin](#)

16 September 2011

Christopher L. Brooks | Wei Gu

[microRNA biogenesis and function in plants](#)

31 October 2005

Xuemei Chen

[The molecular basis of neurodegeneration in multiple sclerosis](#)

1 December 2011

Hans Lassmann | Jack van Horssen

[Sleep and circadian rhythms: Key components in the regulation of energy metabolism](#)

9 January 2008

Aaron D. Laposky | Joseph Bass | Akira Kohsaka | Fred W. Turek

[Rank products: a simple, yet powerful, new method to detect differentially regulated genes in replicated microarray experiments](#)

27 August 2004

Rainer Breitling | Patrick Armengaud | Anna Amtmann | Pawel Herzyk

[The COPI system: Molecular mechanisms and function](#)

3 September 2009

R. Beck | M. Ravet | F.T. Wieland | D. Cassel

[Dysregulation of microRNAs in cancer: Playing with fire](#)

7 July 2011

Sonia A. Melo | Manel Esteller

['Green mice' as a source of ubiquitous green cells](#)

5 May 1997

Masaru Okabe | Masahito Ikawa | Katsuya Kominami | Tomoko Nakanishi | Yoshitake Nishimune

[Physiological significance of selective degradation of p62 by autophagy](#)

2 April 2010

Masaaki Komatsu | Yoshinobu Ichimura



We are also happy to have been able to increase the impact of articles published in *FEBS Letters* in the past few years and 2011 was no exception. The current Impact Factor for *FEBS Letters* is 3.601, the highest in the past five years! We hope that this trend will continue in the future.

A major contribution to the successful year was given by our Special Issues. In 2011 we published five Special Issues:

- Autoimmunity: Rheumatoid Arthritis & Multiple Sclerosis
- Ubiquitin Family Proteins in DNA Damage Response
- Epigenetics
- Turin Special Issue: Biochemistry for Tomorrow's Medicine
- Circadian Rhythms

You can find these and past Special Issues here:

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/febs-letters/special-issues/>

We would like to draw your attention to our next Special Issue, entitled: 'Electron/Proton Coupling in Biological Energy Transduction', which is dedicated to the memory of António Xavier. António Xavier was a very active member of FEBS, serving as member of both the Advanced Courses Committee and the Publications Committee. The Special Issue is edited by Miguel Teixeira and Ricardo Louro, with personal prefaces by Israel Pecht, Miguel Castanho and Helena Santos.



FEBS Letters Special Issues in 2011

As always, we look forward to receiving your manuscripts.

Best wishes,

Felix Wieland, Managing Editor
Aleksander Benjak, Editorial Manager
Daniela Ruffell, Editor
Wilhelm Just, Reviews Editor
Anne Rougeaux, Editorial Assistant

FEBS PUBLICATIONS ANNUAL AWARDS FOR YOUNG SCIENTISTS

€10,000 PRIZES



FEBS Letters Young Group Leader Award

The *FEBS Letters* prize is given to a **young group leader** who is the author of the most outstanding research letter published in *FEBS Letters* in the previous calendar year. The awardee must be the corresponding author of the letter and be aged 40 years or younger at the time of manuscript acceptance.

Details at:

www.febsletters.org/content/younggroupleader



FEBS Journal Prize for Young Scientists

The *FEBS Journal* prize is awarded to the **graduate student or young post-doctoral research worker** (no more than 3 years from the time of award of the PhD degree when the paper is submitted) who is the first author of a paper that is judged to be the best in *FEBS Journal* during the calendar year.

Details at:

www.febsjournal.org/young.asp

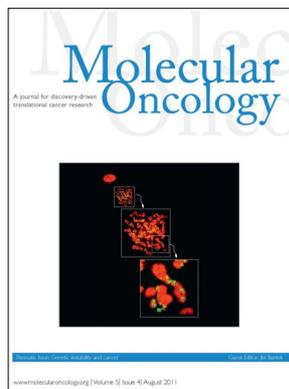


Dear Fellow Scientists,

Cancer is one of the major challenges affecting our societies and the situation is set to worsen due to the increasing elderly population. A significant relief of the cancer burden in the short-term may only be possible by concerted actions aimed at improving prevention and therapeutic strategies that increase cure rates. A multidisciplinary approach to cancer research requires the coordination of basic and clinical research activities and large resources and infrastructures, in addition to the creation of integrated and interdisciplinary environments with the participation of all the stakeholders in the cancer continuum. FEBS and Elsevier started *Molecular Oncology* in response to these challenges, for scientists and health professionals interested in molecular aspects of the development, diagnosis and treatment of cancer. The journal continues to

highlight new discoveries, approaches and technical developments, in basic, clinical, and discovery-driven translational research; in addition, it provides an international forum for debate and raising awareness of issues of broad interest.

In the past year *Molecular Oncology* published, in addition to standard review papers, two thematic issues, which provide authoritative views of current trends in cancer research in these fields:



[Genetic Instability and Cancer](#)
Volume 5, Issue 4 (2011)



[Cutaneous Melanoma](#)
Volume 5, Issue 2 (2011)

Top 10 most downloaded articles in *Molecular Oncology* (over the past 90 days at 7 February 2012)

For complete and up-to-date lists, go to the *Molecular Oncology* website [most-downloaded](#) and [most-cited](#) links.

[Brain tumor stem cells: The cancer stem cell hypothesis writ large](#)

October 2010
Peter B. Dirks

[Stem cells and cancer of the stomach and intestine](#)

October 2010
Robert G.J. Vries | Meritxell Huch | Hans Clevers

[The epigenetics of breast cancer](#)

June 2010
Jovana Jovanovic | Jo Anders Rønneberg | Jörg Tost | Vessela Kristensen

[Imaging and cancer: A review](#)

August 2008
Leonard Fass

[Targeted proteomic strategy for clinical biomarker discovery](#)

February 2009
Ralph Schiess | Bernd Wollscheid | Ruedi Aebersold

[Drug development to overcome resistance to EGFR inhibitors in lung and colorectal cancer](#)

February 2012
Rodrigo Dienstmann | Sara De Dosso | Enriqueta Felip | Josep Tabernero

[Molecular-targeted nanotherapies in cancer: Enabling treatment specificity](#)

December 2011
Elvin Blanco | Angela Hsiao | Guillermo U. Ruiz-Esparza | Matthew G. Landry | Funda Meric-Bernstam | Mauro Ferrari

[Focal adhesion kinase inhibitors are potent anti-angiogenic agents](#)

December 2011
Miguel A. Cabrita | Laura M. Jones | Jennifer L. Quizi | Luc A. Sabourin | Bruce C. McKay | Christina L. Addison

[The role of histone deacetylases \(HDACs\) in human cancer](#)

June 2007
Santiago Ropero | Manel Esteller

[Pancreatic cancer stem cells – update and future perspectives](#)

October 2010
Enza Lonardo | Patrick C. Hermann | Christopher Heeschen



In 2011, we also enhanced the editorial board of the journal. As the field of translational cancer research matures, the number of related research areas develops at an ever-growing pace and with it the number of researchers working in the various fields across the cancer continuum. To keep abreast of these new developments, particularly in the area of personalized cancer medicine, we have appointed two Senior Associated Editors – Anne-Lise Børresen-Dale (Oslo, Norway) and Richard Schilsky (Chicago, USA) – who will provide advice on new areas to be covered by the journal and help to further establish *Molecular Oncology* within this competitive field.

Moreover, we have recently appointed several new members to the Editorial Board – Ruedi Aebersold (Zurich, Switzerland), Stephen Baylin (Baltimore, USA), René Bernards (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Anton Berns (Amsterdam, USA), Carlo Croce (Columbus, USA), Hedvig Hricak

(New York, USA), Guido Kroemer (Paris, France), Ole C. Lingjaerde (Oslo, Norway), Tak W. Mak (Toronto, Canada), Elaine R. Mardis (St Louis, USA), Martine Piccart (Brussels, Belgium), Jorge S. Reis-Filho (London, UK), and Huanming Yang (Beijing, China) – whose joint expertise, together with that of their existing extensive network of collaborators, will help guide the future development of the journal.

Judging from the performance indicators that can sensibly be used to evaluate a journal, we can proudly affirm that *Molecular Oncology* is thriving. The current Impact Factor is 4.25 and the inflow of manuscripts and the number of downloads have increased substantially in recent months.

Looking forward to receiving your manuscripts. With best wishes from us at *Molecular Oncology*,

Julio E. Celis, Editor-in-Chief
José Moreira, Managing Editor
Dorte Holst Pedersen, Editorial Assistant



Dear Fellow Scientists,

FEBS Open Bio, the newest journal published by FEBS, was launched in November 2011. I've been appointed as its Executive Editor and

have established an office in Cambridge, UK, in the same building as the offices of *FEBS Journal*. Some of you may remember me from my time as Editor of *Trends in Biochemical Sciences*, or as Book Reviews Editor for *Nature*. I'm pleased to be involved in the launch of this new journal.

FEBS Open Bio is an open access journal, dedicated to rapid publication of articles across the molecular and cellular life sciences, including both health and disease. It has a much broader scope than the other FEBS publications (*FEBS Letters*, *FEBS Journal* and *Molecular Oncology*). Its editorial policy is delimited to the evaluation of the originality and technical soundness of papers, leaving the assessment of their impact and importance to the scientific community.

FEBS Open Bio has been launched as a result of listening to the scientists FEBS serves. Many of the Editors of existing FEBS journals are actively supporting this new launch and have joined the Editorial Board of *FEBS Open Bio*.

The journal is open to direct submissions as well as the transfer of articles submitted to other FEBS publications that have been judged as original and

technically sound but do not meet the criteria set by the Editors for publication in these journals. Manuscripts transferred in this way will be accompanied by their original reviewer reports and there will be no need for resubmission or reformatting.

All articles will be published electronically (there will be no print edition) and will be freely available on *ScienceDirect*. Authors of accepted manuscripts will be asked to pay a fee of €1200 to offset the cost of managing article submissions, electronic publication and indexing, global dissemination, and permanent preservation of published articles. FEBS may be able to offer a fee waiver for authors who do not have funds to cover publication fees. As with all FEBS publications, any surplus income will go to support the other activities of FEBS.

FEBS Open Bio looks forward to receiving your submissions and welcomes any feedback and suggestions.

Best wishes,
Mary Purton,
Executive Editor



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WWW of Upcoming Events

What: Advances and Controversies in B-Vitamins and Choline 2012

When: 5–8 March 2012

Where: University of Leipzig, Germany

www.b-vitamins-conference.de

What: 22nd Annual Meeting of the Society for Virology Gesellschaft für Virologie (GfV) und Deutsche Vereinigung zur Bekämpfung der Viruskrankheiten e.V. (DVV)

When: 14–17 March 2012

Where: Essen, Germany

www.hdt-essen.de

www.virology2012.de

What: Annual Conference of the Association for General and Applied Microbiology (VAAM) 2012

When: 18–21 March 2012

Where: Tübingen, Germany

www.vaam-kongress.de

What: A Joint Biochemical Society / Royal Society of Chemistry Workshop: Carbohydrate analysis and glycomics: where next?

When: 21 March 2012

Where: Charles Darwin House, London, UK

www.biochemistry.org/Conferences/AllConferences/tabid/379/Page/1/MeetingNo/WS005/view/Conference/Default.aspx

What: A Biochemical Society Focused Meeting: Intrinsically disordered proteins

When: 26–27 March 2012

Where: University of York, UK

www.biochemistry.org/Conferences/AllConferences/tabid/379/Page/1/MeetingNo/SA128/view/Conference/Default.aspx

What: A Biochemical Society Focused Meeting: LRRK2: function and dysfunction

When: 28–30 March 2012

Where: Royal Holloway, University of London, UK

www.biochemistry.org/Conferences/AllConferences/tabid/379/Page/1/MeetingNo/SA130/view/Conference/Default.aspx

What: A Biochemical Society Focused Meeting: Electron transfer at the microbe–mineral interface

When: 2–4 April 2012

Where: University of East Anglia, UK

www.biochemistry.org/Conferences/AllConferences/tabid/379/MeetingNo/SA137/view/Conference/Default.aspx

What: The FEBS3+ Meeting “From Molecules to Life and Back”

What: Joint Congress of the Croatian Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Hungarian Biochemical Society and Slovenian Biochemical Society

When: 13–16 June 2012

Where: Opatija, Croatia

febs3plus.imi.hr

What: 4th International Congress on Cell Membranes and Oxidative Stress Focus on Calcium Signaling and TRP Channels

When: 26–29 June 2012

Where: Isparta, Turkey

www.cmos.org.tr/2012/

What: A Biochemical Society Focused Meeting: How bugs kill bugs: progress and challenges in bacteriocin research

When: 16–18 July 2012

Where: University of Nottingham, UK

www.biochemistry.org/MeetingNo/SA140/view/Conference/

What: The 30th World Congress of Biomedical Laboratory Science

When: 18–22 August 2012

Where: Berlin, Germany

www.ifbls-dvta2012.com

What: Fourth John Innes – Rudjer Bošković Summer School in Applied Molecular Microbiology on “Microbial Metabolites in Nature and Medicine”

When: 25 August – 2 September 2012

Where: Dubrovnik, Croatia

www.jic.ac.uk/science/molmicro/summerschool

What: Annual Meeting of the German Biophysical Society (DGfB) 2012

When: 23–26 September 2012

Where: Goettingen, Germany

www.biophysical-congress.de

What: Annual Meeting of the German Society of Medical Physics (DGMP) 2012

When: 26–29 September 2012

Where: Jena, Germany

www.dgmp-kongress.de

See also the listings of FEBS Advanced Courses for 2012, on pages 10–11 of this issue of *FEBS News* and at <http://www.febs.org/index.php?id=649>

Would you like to announce your scientific event in *FEBS News*?

Events are also listed on the FEBS website.
Please email brief details to: elliss@febs.org